

Glucagon

What is glucagon?

- Glucagon is a hormone that quickly raises the blood sugar level in an **emergency**, such as a severe low blood sugar that makes you unresponsive.
- Someone may need to give you glucagon if your blood sugar is low and you are unable to swallow safely or you are unconscious.
- If you have a very low blood sugar and it is not dealt with, it can be dangerous and can cause a seizure and/or brain damage.
- **Glucagon is not sugar.** When glucagon is injected, your liver receives a message to release sugar to help raise your blood sugar level.

The Glucagon Emergency Kit

- Your doctor will give you a prescription for a glucagon emergency kit.
- Read the instructions. Someone in your household will need to learn how to prepare and give the glucagon, before you need this in an emergency.
- Your nurse will show you and someone else how to use glucagon.
- Do not prepare the glucagon until an emergency happens.
- Check the expiry date regularly. Replace the kit before it expires.

Parts of the kit



Glucagon powder in a bottle (vial)



A syringe with liquid to mix with the powder.

How to give glucagon in an emergency

These instructions will be carried out by someone else helping you.

This person should:

1. Check your blood sugar

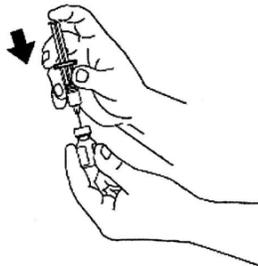
2. Turn you on your side

If your blood sugar is low and you are unable to swallow safely, this person should give you glucagon.

3. Prepare the glucagon

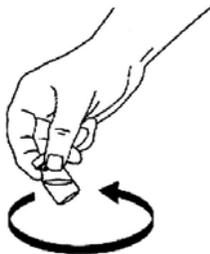


Remove the “flip-off” seal from the vial of glucagon.

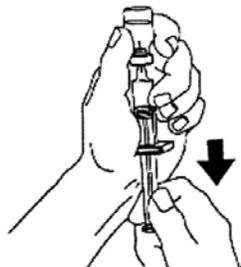


Remove the cap from the needle.

Insert the needle into the vial. Inject all the liquid from the syringe into the vial. Remove the needle.



Swirl the vial gently until the powder is fully dissolved and the liquid becomes clear.



Turn the vial upside down. Insert the same needle into the vial. Draw up all of the liquid from the vial into the syringe.

4. Give the glucagon

- Choose the injection site (buttocks, upper and outer thigh or the fatty part of the back of the upper arm).
- Inject the needle straight in at 90° (the same way as giving insulin).
- Push the plunger in to give the glucagon.
- Remove the needle from the skin.

5. Get medical help

**Call 911 and stay with you.
Keep you on your side.**

How to stay safe while you are waiting for medical help

- Check blood sugar level every 15 minutes until it is above 4 mol/L.
- Once you wake up and are able to swallow, have a snack with carbohydrate and protein. For example, have toast and peanut butter or crackers and cheese.
- Be aware that glucagon may make you feel sick or throw up (vomit).
- Safely dispose of the needle and any remaining glucagon. Replace the glucagon emergency kit as soon as possible.

Your nurse can show you and someone else how to use glucagon.

We gratefully acknowledge **Eli Lilly** for providing the illustrations used in this booklet.