

Low blood sugar (Hypoglycemia)

What is low blood sugar?

Low blood sugar is when your blood sugar is less than 4.0 mmol/L. It is also called **hypoglycemia**.

What happens when your blood sugar is low?

- trembling
- sweating
- anxiety
- hunger
- nausea
- headache
- dizziness
- tingling
- weakness
- drowsiness
- fast heart beat (palpitations)
- difficulty concentrating
- confusion
- vision changes
- difficulty speaking

If you have one or more of these symptoms, test your blood sugar to see if it is less than 4.0 mmol/L.

If your blood sugar is less than 4.0 mmol/L, you need to treat it right away. If left untreated, your symptoms could get worse.

**If you are not able to test your blood sugar,
treat your symptoms right away.**

What causes low blood sugar?

- not eating at regular times or missing meals or snacks
- eating less carbohydrates than usual
- doing more exercise or activity than usual
- taking more diabetes medication or insulin than you need
- drinking alcohol

How do I treat low blood sugar?

1 tablespoon = 15 ml
 ½ cup = 125 ml
 1 oz = 30 grams

Step 1

- Stop what you are doing.
- Use the chart to choose the type of carbohydrate and how much to take, based on your weight.

		Under 33 lb (under 15 kg)	33 to 66 lb (15 to 30 kg)	Over 66 lb (over 30 kg)
Amount of carbohydrate		5 gm	10 gm	15 gm
Type of carbohydrate	4 gm glucose tablets	1	2 or 3	4
	3 gm dextrose tablets	2	3	5
	Juice or regular pop	1 ½ oz (45 ml)	3 oz (90 ml)	6 oz (180 ml or ¾ cup)

Step 2

- Sit down and rest for 15 to 20 minutes. Check your blood sugar level again.
- If your blood sugar is still less than 4.0 mmol/L, repeat Step 1.



If you have low blood sugar just before a meal or snack, treat it as described in Steps 1 and 2 and then, have your regularly planned meal or snack and medication.

If your next meal or snack is more than 1 hour away, have a snack with a starch and protein such as:

- ½ cup of milk and 2 plain cookies
- ½ cup of milk with ½ cup cereal
- 6 crackers with 1 oz cheese
- 1 slice of bread with 1 tablespoon peanut butter or 1 oz meat or cheese

This will help maintain your blood sugar level until your next meal.

**Talk to your health care provider if you have low blood sugars often.
 Always carry a source of fast-acting carbohydrate with you.**