



How To Treat Hypoglycemia

A Patient Education
Resource from
The National Diabetes
Education Initiative® (NDEI®)

Hypoglycemia happens when blood glucose - the amount of sugar in your blood - gets too low. It can make you feel dizzy, shaky, or confused; cause headaches, vision problems, or falls; and can lead to other harmful injuries and even death.

The only way to know if you have hypoglycemia is to check your blood glucose. If you're having signs of hypoglycemia, it's important to treat it right away.

This handout explains an easy-to-remember way to treat hypoglycemia.

The 15/15 Rule

If your blood glucose drops below 70 mg/dL, remember the 15/15 rule and treat your hypoglycemia right away.

- 1. Check your blood glucose.** If it is lower than 70 mg/dL, eat or drink **15 grams** of carbohydrates. If you can't check your blood glucose right away, eat or drink 15 grams of carbohydrates just to be safe.
- 2. Wait 15 minutes.** That's how long it takes for sugar to get into the blood.
- 3. Check your blood glucose again.**
- 4. Repeat steps 1, 2, and 3 if:**
 - Your blood glucose level is still lower than 70 mg/dL

OR

 - You still have symptoms of hypoglycemia

If your blood glucose is lower than 70 mg/dL after you check it three times, call 911.

These are some foods that have 15 grams of simple carbohydrates:

- 5 or 6 pieces of hard candy
- 3 glucose tablets
- 1 serving of glucose gel (read the label for the right amount)
- 2 tablespoons of raisins
- 4 ounces (1/2 cup) of juice or regular soda (not diet soda)
- 1 tablespoon of sugar or honey
- 8 ounces of skim milk or 1% milk



NATIONAL DIABETES EDUCATION INITIATIVE™

**FOR MORE INFORMATION:
TALK WITH YOUR HEALTHCARE PROVIDER**

REFERENCES: Joslin Diabetes Center. How to treat a low blood glucose. http://www.joslin.org/info/how_to_treat_a_low_blood_glucose.html.
• American Diabetes Association. Standards of medical care in diabetes—2016. *Diabetes Care*. 2015;39(suppl 1):S44. • American Diabetes Association. Hypoglycemia (low blood sugar). <http://www.diabetes.org/living-with-diabetes/treatment-and-care/blood-glucose-control/hypoglycemia-low-blood.html>. Websites accessed June 3, 2016.

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