

Handling the Ups and Downs

Knowing what to do when your blood sugar is too high or too low.

Blood sugar won't be perfect every day.

Even when you're doing everything right, your blood sugar will sometimes run higher or lower than you'd like.

The important thing is knowing what to do next.



LOW BLOOD SUGAR

Below 70 mg/dL

COMMON SYMPTOMS

- Shaky
- Sweaty
- Fast heartbeat
- Hungry
- Dizzy
- Confused
- Irritable
- Blurry vision
- Weak

WHAT SHOULD I DO?

Think: 15-15

- 1 Eat or drink 15 grams of fast-acting sugar right away.



- 2 Wait 15 minutes, then check your blood sugar again.

- 3 Repeat if your blood sugar is still below 70 mg/dL.

- 4 Once your blood sugar is back above 70 mg/dL, eat a small snack or meal that includes protein and carbohydrates to keep it stable.



Good choices: cheese and crackers or peanut butter and crackers.



HIGH BLOOD SUGAR

Above your target range

Blood sugar that stays above 180 mg/dL for long periods can cause problems.

COMMON SYMPTOMS

- Urinating more often
- Very thirsty / dry mouth
- Blurred vision
- Tired or weak
- Headache
- Nausea

WHAT SHOULD I DO?

- ✓ Check your blood sugar more often (every 2-4 hours).

- ✓ Drink water — stay well hydrated with sugar-free fluids.

- ✓ Take your medicine as prescribed. Do not take extra insulin unless your care team has given you specific instructions.

- ✓ Stay active if you feel well — light activity like walking can help lower blood sugar.

- ✗ Do NOT exercise if your blood sugar is above 300 mg/dL or if you feel unwell.

- ✗ Contact your care team if your blood sugar stays above 300 mg/dL or does not come down with your usual treatment.



SICK DAYS

(Illness, Cold, Flu, Infection)

When you are sick, your blood sugar can change quickly.

- ✓ Check your blood sugar every 2-4 hours.
- ✓ Keep taking your diabetes medicines and insulin unless your care team tells you otherwise.
- ✓ Drink plenty of sugar-free fluids to stay hydrated.
- ✓ If you use insulin: **Never stop your long-acting (basal) insulin, even if you are not eating.**

CALL YOUR CARE TEAM IF:

- Your blood sugar stays above 300 mg/dL
- You cannot keep food or fluids down
- You have a fever that does not improve
- You are unsure what to do

Ask your care team in advance which of your medicines should be held during illness (for example, metformin or SGLT2 inhibitors may need to be paused if you are dehydrated or not eating).



GET EMERGENCY HELP

Go to the emergency room or call 911 if you have any of these:

- Blood sugar above 300 mg/dL that does not come down
- Nausea, vomiting, or stomach pain that won't stop
- Fruity-smelling breath
- Fast, deep breathing
- Confusion, extreme drowsiness, or difficulty staying awake
- Unable to keep fluids down

When in doubt, get help. It's always the right call.



Karen's Corner

One high reading or one low reading doesn't mean you've failed. Diabetes isn't about having perfect numbers every day.

It's about recognizing when something isn't right and knowing what to do next.

If you're ever unsure, I'd much rather you call me than worry at home. — Karen



QUESTIONS FOR KAREN

- ☐ What should I keep at home for low blood sugar?
- ☐ When should I call you about my blood sugar?
- ☐ What should I do if I'm sick?
- ☐ What blood sugar is considered an emergency?
- ☐ Do I need a sick-day plan?

