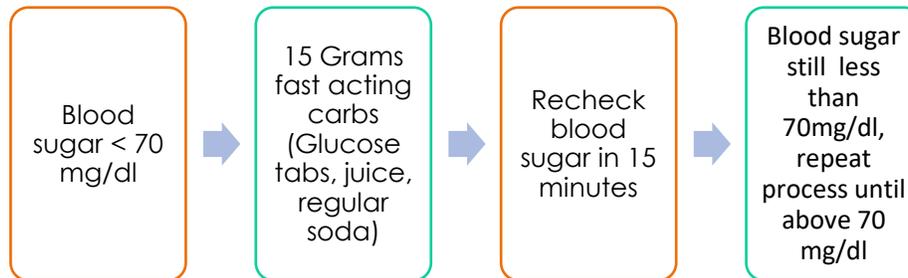


Low Blood Sugar (Hypoglycemia)

Hypoglycemia means having a blood sugar level below 70mg/dL. It is very important that when you do experience a low blood sugar level, you know how to recognize the symptoms and treat the situation promptly. Prevention of low blood sugar levels is the primary goal. Remember the **'Rule of 15'**.



There are 2 types of symptoms or signs associated with low blood sugar levels. It is important to listen and respond to these symptoms. If you have had elevated blood sugar levels for a long period of time, you may feel low even if your blood sugar levels are in the target range.

If you are aware of possible causes, you have the opportunity to prevent it from happening. Prevention is always the first priority.

Causes of low blood sugar levels include:

- Not enough carb intake
- General exercise
- Breastfeeding
- Weight loss
- Alcohol
- Insulin injected into muscle
- Too much diabetes medication

Hypoglycemia unawareness is the term given when people do not experience the symptoms and are unaware that their blood sugar levels are low. Possible reasons for this include frequent low or untreated blood sugar levels, long-standing diabetes and nerve damage (autonomic neuropathy).

Treatment of Hypoglycemia

Unless a person is unconscious or incoherent, the **'Rule of 15'** should be followed for all blood sugar levels below 70mg/dl – yes, that means a blood sugar level of 69mg/dl! Remember you cannot use the **'How you feel'** method in diabetes! Always use your blood sugar meter or CGM. If you are unable to safely test your blood sugar (i.e. driving), treat the low blood and then test as soon as it is safe to do so.

Appropriate quick acting carbohydrates (15 gms) includes:

- 4 glucose tablets
- 4 oz of juice
- 4 oz of regular soda
- Soft pure sugar candy that is easy to chew
 - (i.e. Sweet Tarts/ Starbursts)

If you are not going to eat within the next hour or if you are active, eat a snack that is protein or fat, like cheese, peanut butter, meat, or avocado.



Key Education Point

High fat carbohydrate foods such as chocolate and cookies are not appropriate treatments for low blood glucose levels. These foods take too long to digest and therefore take too long to raise your blood glucose level.

If you take medications that can lower your blood sugar

- Learn your body's warning signs of a low blood sugar
- Always carry fast acting glucose with you – remember the 'Rule of 15'
- Wear some form of diabetes identification such as a necklace or bracelet
- Check your blood sugar level before driving
- Explain the possible sign/symptoms and treatment of low blood sugar to relatives, friends or coworkers so they will know how to help you