



Low blood sugar.

Low blood sugar, also called hypoglycemia, means that your blood sugar is below normal levels. Why is that a problem? Blood sugar fuels your body's cells, and if those cells don't get the fuel they need, your body may not function properly. Symptoms of hypoglycemia range from feeling dizzy and confused to more extreme symptoms, such as passing out or fainting. This condition is primarily a problem for people with diabetes, but with the right prevention methods, it's a problem that can easily be managed.

Causes of low blood sugar

Many people with diabetes are on insulin or other medications to help manage their blood sugar levels, but these medications can also cause low blood sugar. Here are some situations that may cause your levels to dip:

- Taking too much insulin
- Skipping a meal or eating later or less than normal (but still taking the same amount of medication or insulin)
- Engaging in excess physical activity without eating enough beforehand
- Drinking too much alcohol or drinking on an empty stomach

Warning signs of low blood sugar

Symptoms vary from person to person and can become more severe if not treated. Common early symptoms include:

- Shakiness, nervousness or anxiety
- Sweating, chills and clamminess
- Irritability or impatience
- Confusion or dizziness
- Rapid/fast heartbeat
- Hunger and nausea
- Weakness or feeling tired

How to treat low blood sugar

Symptoms can come on quickly, which means it's important to know how to be prepared. According to the American Diabetes Association (ADA), the only way to know for sure that you are experiencing low blood sugar is to check your glucose levels.

Usually, low blood sugar means you have a reading below seventy milligrams per deciliter (mg/dL). If you can't check your glucose and you're experiencing symptoms, you should still treat yourself right away because if it drops too low, you could experience severe symptoms.

Treatment steps include:



Eat or drink something with fifteen grams of carbohydrate. Options include four glucose tablets, 1/2 cup of fruit juice or regular (non-diet) soda, or hard candies (refer to their packaging to determine the appropriate quantity).



Don't eat something with high amounts of fat or fiber because it may slow absorption of glucose into your bloodstream.



After eating or drinking, wait about fifteen minutes, then check your blood sugar. If it's still below seventy mg/dL, then eat another fifteen grams of carbohydrates.



Repeat treatment steps until your blood sugar is in its normal range.

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If you're still not feeling well and your glucose levels do not return to normal, you should have someone drive you to the emergency department or call 911. Do not drive when you're experiencing hypoglycemia.

If you have severe symptoms, such as seizures, convulsions or unconsciousness, someone else will need to treat you with glucagon, a hormone that stimulates the release of glucose into your bloodstream when your blood glucose levels are too low. Emergency glucagon kits are available by prescription

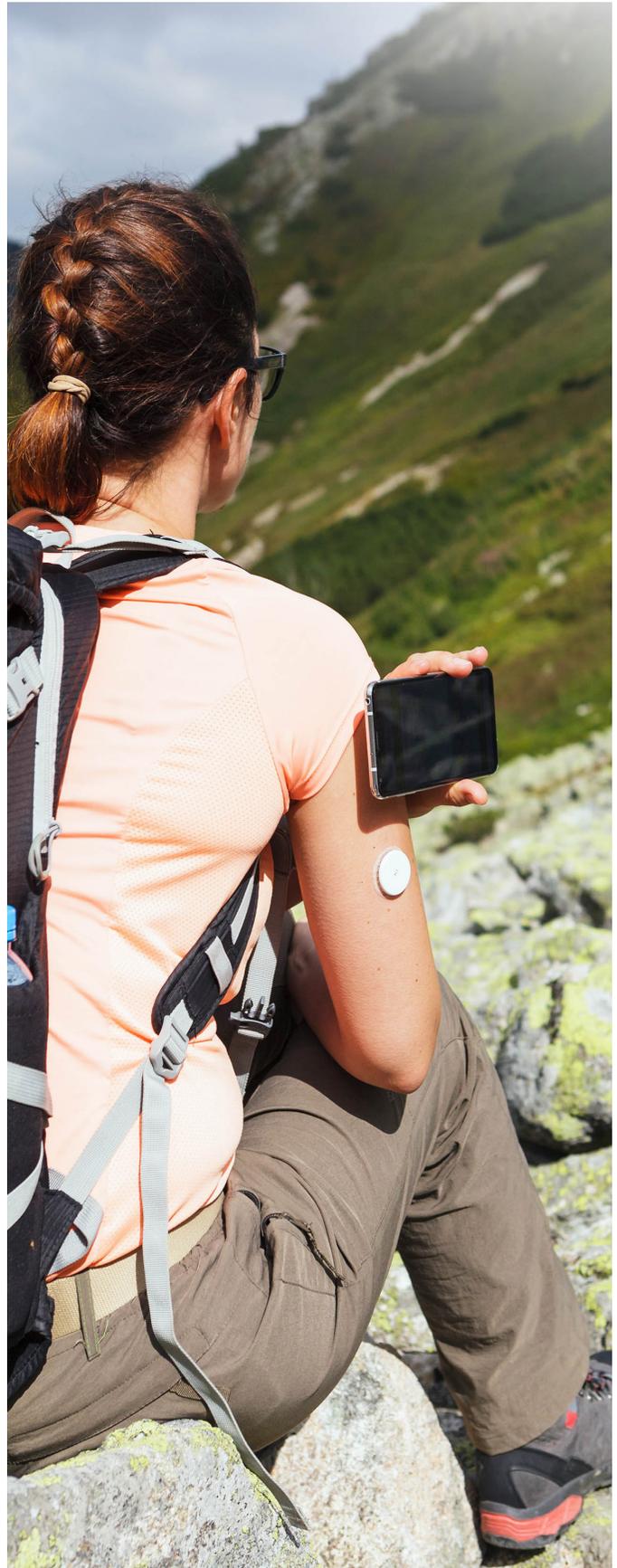
How to prevent low blood sugar

The best way to manage low blood sugar is to prevent it from happening. Here are some preventative steps you can take:

- Monitor your blood sugar frequently.
- Educate friends and family about your signs of low blood sugar and teach them how to help you.
- Carry glucose tablets or other healthy snacks with you at all times. Keep them along with your other essential supplies in an on-the-go diabetes kit.
- Talk to your doctor about ways to reduce your risk for low blood sugar.
- Eat regular meals and snacks to keep your blood glucose levels consistent.
- Staying on top of your diabetes symptoms can be easy if you have the right information and supplies.

These articles are not a substitute for medical advice and are not intended to treat or cure any disease. Advances in medicine may cause this information to become outdated, invalid or subject to debate. Professional opinions and interpretations of scientific literature may vary. Consult your healthcare professional before making changes to your diet, exercise or medication regimen. Sources:

- <https://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/diabetes/overview/preventing-problems/low-blood-glucose-hypoglycemia>
- <https://www.medlineplus.gov/ency/patientinstructions/000085.htm>
- <https://diabetes.org/healthy-living/medication-treatments/blood-glucose-testing-and-control/hypoglycemia>
- <https://www.healthline.com/health/hypoglycemia#overview1>
- <https://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/diabetes/overview/preventing-problems/low-blood-glucose-hypoglycemia>
- <https://www.webmd.com/diabetes/diabetes-hypoglycemia#1>



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