American Diabetes Association®

Hypoglycemia (Low Blood Glucose)

Hypoglycemia (low blood glucose) has three levels based on blood glucose (blood sugar) levels and how serious your symptoms are.



LEVEL 1

Your blood glucose is less than 70 mg/dL but over or at 54 mg/dL



LEVEL 2

Your blood glucose is less than 54 mg/dL



LEVEL 3

Your blood glucose has affected your ability to think or control your body so you need help to treat it.

What makes you at risk for severe hypoglycemia?

- You're taking certain medications, such as insulin, sulfonylurea, or meglitinide—for example glyburide or glipizid.
- You've had low blood glucose in the past
- You don't feel symptoms or notice signs of low blood glucose
- You have advanced kidney disease
- You're an older adult
- You have memory problems

Symptoms of Hypoglycemia


Hunger


Sweating, chills, and clamminess


Feeling shaky, nervous, or anxious


Fast heartbeat


Feeling lightheaded or dizzy


Confusion


Loss of consciousness


Seizure


Coma

ASSESS AND PREVENT HYPOGLYCEMIA

- Keep your diabetes toolkit up to date with: glucose tablets or gel, juice, regular soda, candy, and glucagon.
- Check your blood glucose as directed, especially when you're active or meals and snacks may not happen at the usual time.



- Use a continuous glucose monitor (CGM) if you're at high risk for low blood glucose or using insulin.
- Take your medications as directed, but don't take insulin if your blood glucose is low.
- Treat low blood glucose with the 15-15 Rule right away. Learn about the 15-15 Rule at **diabetes.org/Lows**.
- Alcohol increases your risk for low blood glucose and that risk can continue 24 hours after you drink. Alcohol also mask symptoms of lows.
- Talk with your health care team about your treatment plan if you:
  - Regularly have low blood glucose levels
  - You're often worried about or afraid of lows.

TREATING SEVERE HYPOGLYCEMIA

- Glucagon is a treatment for severe hypoglycemia when you can't eat or drink, including when you're not conscious. If you're at risk of hypoglycemia, you should have a prescription for glucagon. Keep an eye on your glucagon to be sure it hasn't expired. Tips for glucagon:
  - **Pick glucagon that's simple and easy to use:** Ready-to-use glucagon in auto-injectors or nasal powder save time.
  - **Teach those around you:** Teach family, coworkers, or roommates where to find and how to use glucagon. They don't need a medical background to give it to you safely.



Don't hesitate to call 911. Call 911 if someone is unconscious, glucagon isn't available, or there isn't someone nearby who knows how to use it.

This infographic is based on recommendations from the ADA's *Standards of Care in Diabetes—2026*

Learn more at **diabetes.org** | 1-800-DIABETES (800-342-2383)