American Diabetes Association®

# Severe Hypoglycemia Solutions

## What to Do When It Happens

**Severe hypoglycemia** is when your blood glucose (blood sugar) level drops dangerously low. This is a medical emergency and can happen if you are on blood glucose-reducing medications (insulin, sulfonylureas, or meglitinides).

**Severe hypoglycemia can cause**


Confusion


Weakness


Fainting


Seizure


Coma

If left untreated for too long, it can lead to brain or organ damage or even death.

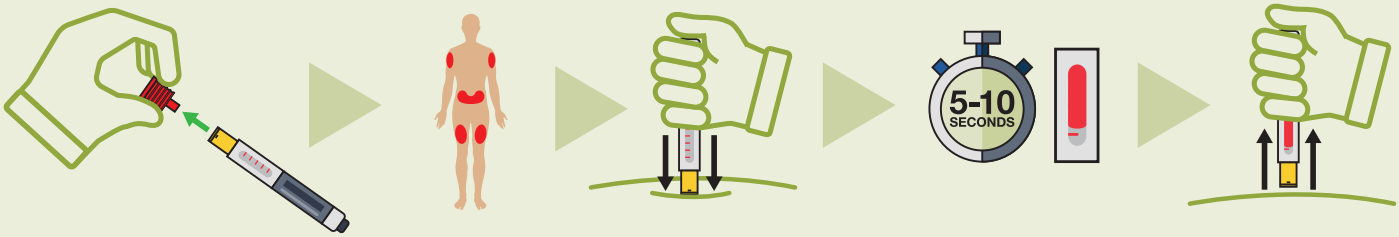
**There are treatment options available if you experience severe hypoglycemia.**

Talk to your doctor about getting a prescription for glucagon to have on hand—preferably ready-to-use glucagon. Glucagon quickly raises your blood glucose levels by causing the liver to release stored glucose into your bloodstream. Others can administer glucagon if you are unable to, just make sure they know exactly how to give it to you.

## Pre-Mixed, Ready-to-use Glucagon Pen

- Pre-mixed devices work like an epinephrine auto-injector and other injectable pen medications.
- Stable form of glucagon ready to immediately inject, no mixing.
- Can be given to an unconscious person.

Read the device instructions. Different autoinjector glucagon devices may have slight variations, so review specific instructions in your kit. This is general guidance:




1. Hold the unit upright. Remove the cap or pull the gray cap straight off.
2. Choose a bare skin injection site (outer upper arm, thigh, or lower stomach are ideal locations).
3. Clean the site with an alcohol swab.
4. Push and hold the device straight down on bare skin until the needle guard is fully pressed down. You may hear a click.
5. Depending on the device, hold down for 5 or 10 seconds (you may hear a second click) until the window turns red.
6. Remove the pen straight up.

**Turn the person on their side as vomiting and/or choking may be common. After giving the dose, call for emergency medical help (911) right away.**



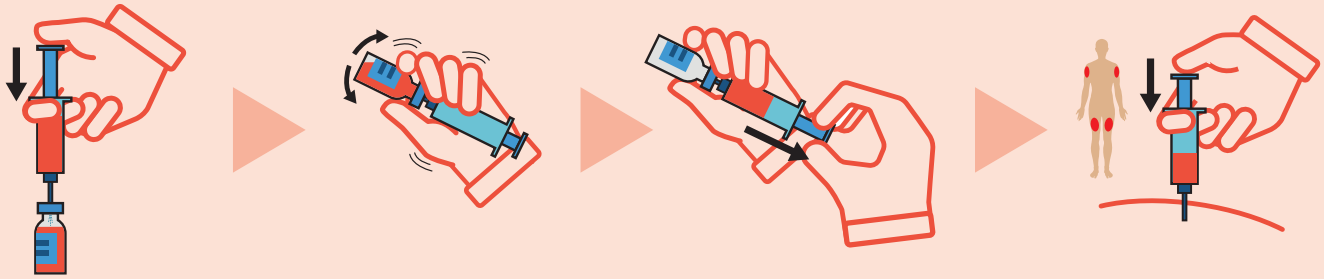

This infographic is based on recommendations from the ADA's *Standards of Care in Diabetes—2026*

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

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## Mixed Glucagon

- Comes with a powder and a liquid to dilute.
- Needs to be mixed right before being administered.
- Can be given to an unconscious person.

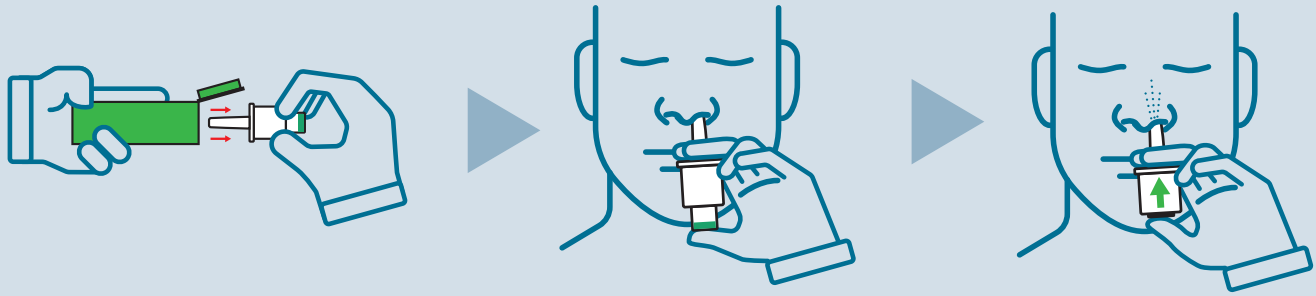


1. Remove the glucagon kit from the package.
2. Remove the seal from the vial of powder.
3. Remove the needle cover from the syringe.
4. Insert the needle into the vial and push the plunger to empty the saline into the powder.
5. Gently roll or swirl the vial to dissolve the powder into the liquid until it is clear.
6. Draw the solution back into the syringe.
7. Inject into the outer mid-thigh or arm muscle of the person with severe hypoglycemia.

**Turn the person on their side as vomiting and/or choking may be common. After giving the dose, call for emergency medical help (911) right away.**

## Glucagon Nasal Powder

- Similar to a nasal spray.
- Drives powdered glucagon into the nose where it is quickly absorbed into the bloodstream.
- Needle-free delivery.
- Fast, easy to follow steps.
- Can be given to an unconscious person.



1. Remove the shrink wrap around device by pulling on the red stripe.
2. Open the lid and remove the device from the tube (do not push the plunger or test the device until ready to give a dose).
3. Hold the nasal device between your fingers and thumb.
4. Gently insert the tip of the device into one nostril, until fingers touch the outside of the nose.
5. Press the plunger firmly to give the dose. The dose does not need to be inhaled.
6. Remove the nasal device from the nose.
7. If no response within 15 minutes, administer a second dose.

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