

# Hypoglycemia

Hypoglycemia, or **low blood sugar**, is when your blood sugar reading falls below **4.0 mmol/L**

This happens when there is not enough sugar in your body. It can occur very quickly, therefore, if you are experiencing the signs or symptoms of hypoglycemia you need to **test and treat your blood sugar immediately**. If you cannot test your sugar, and have any of the symptoms shown below you should still treat the symptoms as if you are having a low blood sugar.

## Causes

- Missing a meal or not eating the whole meal
- More activity than usual or than expected
- Not eating when you are sick
- Eating later than usual
- Taking too much diabetes medications or insulin
- Drinking alcohol

## How to Treat

You **MUST** have 15 grams of fast acting carbohydrate (sugar). Have one of the following:

- 3-4 dextrose (dex 4) tablets (PREFERRED)
- 3 packets of table sugar dissolved in water
- ½ cup apple juice
- 1 tbsp honey
- ½ cup regular sugar soda

## Symptoms

You may experience any of the following:



Shaky



Fast Heartbeat



Sweaty



Dizzy



Numbness in Mouth



Hungry



Blurred Vision



Weak  
or Tired



Headache  
or Confused



Nervous/Anxious  
or Upset

## After Treating

- **Wait 15 mins and test your blood sugars again**
- If it is still less than 4.0, treat again
- If it is greater than 4.0, you will need to eat
  - ➔ If your next meal is going to be in 45mins then eat the meal now. If your meal is going to be in more than 45mins then have a balanced snack.

### Balanced snacks include a Carb and a Protein:

- 7 soda crackers + 1oz of cheese
- 1 slice of bread + 2tbsp peanut butter
- ½ peach + ¼ cup 1% cottage cheese

## Nighttime Low Blood Sugar Symptoms

Include all of the above symptoms as well as night sweats, nightmares or mood changes.

## Severe Symptoms

If your blood sugar drops very low you could lose consciousness or have a seizure. **THIS IS A MEDICAL EMERGENCY.**

## Treating Severe Hypoglycemia

If your blood sugar drops very low you could lose consciousness or have a seizure. **THIS IS A MEDICAL EMERGENCY** that requires an injection of glucagon by another person or EMS.

Glucagon kits are available by prescription. Speak with your health care provider about whether you should purchase one and how to use it.