

BLOOD GLUCOSE 101: MANAGING YOUR BLOOD GLUCOSE LEVEL

WHAT TO DO WHEN YOUR BLOOD GLUCOSE IS TOO HIGH (HYPERGLYCEMIA):

Follow the **treatment plan** your doctor or nurse has given you. If your blood glucose reads **greater than 300** on two consecutive readings (even with following your treatment plan), contact your doctor or nurse to tell them and get instructions on what to do. If your blood glucose reads **higher than 500**—even one time—have someone take you to the emergency room or call 911.

WHAT TO DO WHEN YOUR BLOOD SUGAR IS TOO LOW (HYPOGLYCEMIA):

In the event of blood sugar being too low, many people will want to eat as much as they can until they feel better. However, this can cause blood sugar levels to shoot way up. Using the step-by-step approach of the “15-15 Rule” can help you avoid this, and prevent high blood sugar levels.

To follow the “15-15 Rule”: eat 15 grams of a carbohydrate (see the below examples) to raise your blood sugar and test it again after 15 minutes. If it’s still below 70 mg/dL, eat another serving of carbohydrates. Repeat these steps until your blood sugar is at least 70 mg/dL. Once your blood sugar is back to normal, eat a meal or snack to make sure it doesn’t drop below 70 again.

EXAMPLES OF 15 GRAMS OF CARBOHYDRATES

Glucose tablets (read instructions on the package)

Gel tube (read instructions on the package)

Four (4) ounces (1/2 cup) of juice or regular soda (not diet)

One (1) tablespoon (or three teaspoons) of sugar, honey, or corn syrup

Hard candies, jellybeans, or gumdrops—see food label for how many to consume

Severe hypoglycemia is a medical emergency, and you or someone assisting you should call 911 if you have it. Severe hypoglycemia is happening when your blood sugars fall to **dangerously low levels**, such as **50 mg/dL or lower**—if this happens, you will need someone to help you call 911. Symptoms can progress quickly from shakiness and fast heart rate to include confusion, weakness, and your body being unable to do things it can normally do. If left untreated, it can progress from there to loss of consciousness (passing out/fainting), seizure, coma, and death. It can be caused by taking too much insulin or other diabetes medicine, not eating enough food after taking insulin, or too much exercise. An injectable medicine called **Glucagon** is available by prescription to treat episodes like this. Talk to your doctor about whether this prescription is right for you.