



ASSIST OFFICER

A Summary Of Hints To Aid Police Officers

DIABETES MELLITUS...WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW (Page 1 of 2)

There are 25 million people in the United States who have diabetes. Of that number, it is estimated that 7 million people are not aware that they have the disease. Diabetes has no cure.

In diabetes, insulin, a hormone produced by the pancreas, is either totally or partially lacking. Insulin is needed by the body to convert sugar, starches and other food into energy needed to sustain life. Without insulin, life is not possible for long due to high sugars and toxins that increase in the blood. On the other hand, too much insulin lowers the blood sugar so much that the brain and other organs cannot function.

There are two major types of Diabetes:

Type 1 Diabetes - Accounts for 10% of all diabetes cases (formerly called Juvenile but can occur at any age). This condition requires daily insulin because the body does not produce insulin. It is administered via needle injections or an insulin pump. The absence of insulin can lead to severe illness and death.

Type 2 Diabetes - The body does not produce sufficient quantities of insulin. This condition requires diet, exercise, pills and sometimes insulin injections and pumps to control the blood sugar.

DIABETIC EMERGENCIES:

INSULIN REACTION: (*Hypoglycemia - very low blood sugar*) This condition can be caused by too much insulin or certain diabetes pills, alone, or in conjunction with, too little or delayed food intake, exercise, alcohol, drugs, over the counter medication, or any combinations of these factors.

The following signs and symptoms of a *very low blood sugar emergency* that may occur at the onset of insulin reactions:

- * Possible sudden onset
- * Staggering or poor coordination (may be mistaken for intoxication or drug use)
- * Slurred Speech
- * Confusion
- * Poor concentration
- * Bizarre behavior
- * Changes in personality or mood swings (irritable, displaying anger, bad temper or combative!)
- * Pale color
- * Sudden hunger
- * Excessive sweating
- * Trembling
- * Eventual unconsciousness and seizures

DIABETIC COMA: (*Hyperglycemia - very high blood sugar*) This condition may be caused by insufficient insulin, illness, dehydration, a heart attack, stroke or other medical problems.

The following signs and symptoms of a *very high blood sugar emergency* that may require first aid:

- * Gradual onset
- * Drowsiness
- * Confusion
- * Extreme thirst
- * Very frequent urination
- * Flushed skin
- * Vomiting
- * Fruity breath odor (may be mistaken for alcohol on breath)
- * Heavy breathing
- * Eventual unconsciousness

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LOOK FOR EVIDENCE OF DIABETES: MEDIC ALERTS AND DIABETES SUPPLIES

Always check for *medical alert tags* (worn around the neck or wrist) and wallet cards if the person is exhibiting the signs or symptoms of a diabetic emergency. A medical alert tag can provide you with important medical information about the person's condition. If no medical alert tag is present, try asking the individual about a possible medical condition. When in doubt, treat as a medical emergency!

EMERGENCY CARE FOR LOW BLOOD SUGAR:

It can be hard to tell if a victim has a high or low blood-sugar, so treat the low blood sugar first and give water if they can drink! Have the person eat sugar (15 grams, about ½ glass of OJ or 3 sugar tablets) or drink other fruit juice NOT DIET SODA or DIET JUICE!

DO NOT FORCE AN UNCONSCIOUS PERSON TO SWALLOW!

Give sugar if all three conditions are present:

- * The victim is known to have diabetes.
- * The victim's mental status is altered.
- * The victim is awake enough to swallow.

INSULIN DELIVERY SYSTEMS AND DIABETES SUPPLIES

Diabetes Medic Alerts:



Insulin pumps:



Insulin bottles:



Blood Glucose Meter:



Insulin injections "pens":



Lancet devices:

