

LOW BLOOD SUGAR (HYPOGLYCEMIA) AND HIGH BLOOD SUGAR (HYPERGLYCEMIA)

The goal of managing diabetes is to keep your blood sugar within your target range. Everyone's target range is different. You and your care team will decide on a healthy target range for you.

WHAT IS YOUR TARGET RANGE?

My target range is between _____ and _____.

Remember the 3 things that keep blood sugar on target?

1: _____

2: _____

3: _____

**STOP, THINK, ACT,
and REFLECT** on how
you can do your best.
Choose to eat healthy,
daily exercise, and take
your medicine
every day.

(Answer: diet, activity, medicines)

LOW BLOOD SUGAR (HYPOGLYCEMIA)

Your blood sugar may be out of range even when you do your best. When your blood sugar drops below target, it can make you feel funny. Low blood sugar is called *hypoglycemia*.

What causes low blood sugar?

Low blood sugar happens when there is too much insulin for the sugar in the blood. Low blood sugar is not very common in people with type 2 diabetes who are not taking insulin.

Here are some causes of low blood sugar:

- ▶ You took too much insulin or too many diabetes pills.
- ▶ You skipped a meal after taking your medicine
- ▶ You are sick and cannot eat your usual meals and snacks
- ▶ You exercised a lot more than usual

Sometimes you will not know why your blood sugar is low.

LOW BLOOD SUGAR (HYPOGLYCEMIA) AND HIGH BLOOD SUGAR (HYPERGLYCEMIA)

How does it feel to have low blood sugar?

Low blood sugar has many common symptoms and signs. You may have many or just a few of these feelings:

- ▶ Irritable or cranky
- ▶ Unusual behavior
- ▶ Confused
- ▶ Sweaty
- ▶ Shaky or Weak
- ▶ Drowsy or Sleepy
- ▶ Blurry vision or trouble focusing
- ▶ Headache
- ▶ Hungry
- ▶ Lack of coordination
- ▶ Moody
- ▶ Crying for no reason
- ▶ Bad dreams or nightmares
- ▶ Restless sleep

When in doubt, check it out! Even when you feel or act “low,” check your blood sugar to confirm.

How do I treat low blood sugar?

If you have symptoms and feel like your blood sugar is low and dropping quickly, eat or drink something with 15 grams of carbohydrates in it, like 4 ounces (1/2 cup) of juice.

Follow these steps:

Step 1. Check. Stop what you’re doing. Check your blood sugar on your meter. What if you don’t have your meter? Treat as if you know your blood sugar is low.

Step 2. Treat. Eat or drink something with 15 grams of carbohydrate in it:

- ▶ 4 ounces (1/2 cup) of juice or regular soda (not a diet soda)
- ▶ 5-6 pieces of hard candy (depends on size)
- ▶ 3-4 glucose tablets (depends on size)
- ▶ 1 small tube of cake frosting gel
- ▶ 1 tablespoon of honey or jelly or syrup (regular, not diet or “lite”)

Step 3. Wait. Wait 15 minutes. It can take this long for the sugar to get into your blood. This is called the 15-15 Rule: Eat 15 grams of carbohydrate and wait 15 minutes. Sit still or lie down while you wait.

Step 4. Repeat. Recheck your blood sugar 15 minutes after treating. If your blood sugar is still low, treat again with 15 grams of carbohydrate.

Step 5. Eat. If your next meal or snack is more than 1 hour away, eat a snack. The snack should include carbohydrates that will last longer:

- ▶ Half a turkey sandwich
- ▶ 6 soda crackers
- ▶ 15 fat-free snack chips
- ▶ 1 cup skim or low fat milk
- ▶ ¾ cup of cereal

Step 6. Call. If your blood sugar does not rise after treating twice, call the urgent care or emergency number to speak with your diabetes care team.

Don’t over-treat! When you have low blood sugar, you may feel like eating more than 15 grams of carbs. Don’t do it! Eating too much will make your blood sugar go too high.

Prevent Low Blood Sugar

There are things you can do to avoid low blood sugar:

- ▶ Take the correct dose of diabetes medicines. Never double your dose unless your diabetes care team tells you to.
- ▶ Don’t skip meals after taking your medicine.
- ▶ Track your blood sugar levels. If your blood sugar levels go low often, talk with your care team.

Tell important people in your life about your diabetes. Teach them how to treat low blood sugar. These people could be:

- ▶ School nurses
- ▶ Older brothers and sisters
- ▶ Grandparents
- ▶ Coaches
- ▶ School bus drivers
- ▶ Teachers
- ▶ Babysitters
- ▶ Friends who you spend a lot of time with
- ▶ Co-workers

Wear some type of medical identification, like a necklace or bracelet.

HIGH BLOOD SUGAR (HYPERGLYCEMIA)

Even when you do your best, your blood sugar may be too high. When your blood sugar goes above target, it can make you feel funny. High blood sugar is called hyperglycemia.

What is high blood sugar?

High blood sugar is when there is too much sugar and not enough insulin in the blood. Without enough insulin, sugar does not get into the body's cells for energy.

Remember, insulin opens the cell door to let sugar into the cell and out of the blood. Without enough insulin, sugar is trapped in the blood. That leads to high blood sugar.

Here are some causes of high blood sugar:

- ▶ You ate too much food
- ▶ You are sick
- ▶ You are feeling stressed
- ▶ You are less active
- ▶ You forgot to take your insulin or diabetes pills

Sometimes you will not know why high blood sugar happened. The important thing is to treat it the best you can.

How does it feel to have high blood sugar?

High blood sugar has many common symptoms and signs. You may have many or few of these feelings:

- ▶ Thirsty
- ▶ Tired
- ▶ Blurry vision or trouble focusing
- ▶ Need to urinate more often
- ▶ Need to get up at night to urinate
- ▶ Very dry skin or mouth
- ▶ Yeast or fungal infections (like jock itch)

When in doubt, check it out! The best way to recognize high blood sugar is to check your blood sugar level. Sometimes you may not feel any different when your blood sugar is high.

Why should I worry about high blood sugar?

Good question! Here are some facts about high blood sugar:

FACT. Over time, high blood sugar can lead to health problems. Our bodies were not made to live with high blood sugar. High blood sugar can hurt your eyes, feet, kidneys, blood vessels, and heart.

FACT. High blood sugar can make you feel bad. People have low energy with high blood sugar.

FACT. High blood sugar can make your body and mouth feel very dry or dehydrated.

FACT. High blood sugar can cause more cavities in your teeth.

FACT. High blood sugar can cause yeast or fungal infections (like jock itch).

How do I treat high blood sugar?

Drink plenty of water or sugar-free drinks. High blood sugar can make your body get too dry or dehydrated. If you are not feeling well, call your diabetes care team.

You should drink about 1 to 2 cups of sugar-free liquids every hour. Here are some good choices:

- ▶ Water
- ▶ Sugar-free soft drinks (diet soda)
- ▶ Sugar-free flavored powdered drink mixes
- ▶ Sugar-free gelatin desserts
- ▶ Sugar-free frozen ices or pops
- ▶ Sugar-free tea or coffee
- ▶ Broth or onion soup

Call Your Care Team

It is important to call your doctor or diabetes educator if any of the following happens:

- ▶ Vomiting
- ▶ Can't eat or drink
- ▶ Very dry mouth
- ▶ Fever