

# HYPOLYCEMIA

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When it comes to diabetes, managing blood sugar throughout the day can be confusing and complicated. One of the most important things to consider is how your blood sugar can fluctuate throughout the day. The best way to keep blood sugar in check is to consume regular meals and snacks as the day goes on. When you go long periods of time without eating, blood sugars can become low depending on the last thing that was eaten and when. A balanced meal of a carbohydrate, protein, and fat, along with a couple of snacks throughout the day, can make all of the difference. For example, an adequate meal would include 1 cup sweet potato, 4 oz of roasted or grilled chicken, and 1 cup of broccoli sautéed in 1 Tbsp olive oil and an example of an adequate snack would include 1 Tbsp of natural peanut butter and a small apple or approximately 14 whole wheat crackers with 1 oz of low fat cheese.

## NORMAL BLOOD SUGAR LEVELS WITHOUT DIABETES:

	<b>FASTING Blood Sugars Levels</b>	<b>NON-FASTING Blood Sugar Levels</b>
<b>Hypoglycemia (low blood sugars)</b>	<70 mg/dL	<70 mg/dL
<b>Normal blood sugars</b>	70-100 mg/dL	70-140 mg/dL
<b>Hyperglycemia (high blood sugars)</b>	>130 mg/dL	>180 mg/dL

### What actually happens when we go long periods of time without eating?

When you go long periods of time without eating, you can get low blood sugar, also known as hypoglycemia. This can be dangerous for individuals with diabetes because it can mean that there is an imbalance of insulin or oral diabetes medications in their system that can cause low blood sugar or that you have gone too long without eating.

How do you know if you have low blood sugar? Some individuals may experience symptoms of hypoglycemia such as:

- Feeling hungry
- Feeling shaky or having a rapid heart rate
- Sweaty or having cold, clammy skin
- Feeling drowsy or weak
- Having periods of confusion
- Feeling dizzy

However, some individuals may not experience signs or symptoms of hypoglycemia at all. The best way

to tell if you have low blood sugar is to test. Testing your blood sugar can help you to prevent episodes of hypoglycemia as well as help you to establish patterns of how your blood sugar fluctuates during the day.

### If you have low blood sugar, what are ways to treat it?

1. Check your blood sugar if you are feeling symptoms of hypoglycemia (or if you do not feel symptoms, make sure you are checking your blood sugar more frequently throughout the day)
2. Consume something (food or drink) that has sugar in it so that it can absorb into your blood stream quickly. Ideally, this would be a sugary food or drink such as fruit juice or glucose tablets to help raise the blood sugar.
3. Wait 10-15 minutes for the sugary food that was just consumed to work
4. After waiting 10-15 minutes, recheck blood sugar to see if it has returned to the normal range. If not, retreat using the same steps.

### What are ways to prevent hypoglycemia?

- Eat all scheduled meals and snacks and do not skip any meals or snacks (this usually means eating every 3-4 hours)
- Follow the correct dosage of medication, whether that is insulin or oral medications
- Check blood sugars regularly – at least twice a day
- Do not take a hot shower or bath after an insulin shot is given because this can cause the insulin to be absorbed too fast into the blood stream, resulting in hypoglycemia
- Make sure you carry around a sugary food such as jelly beans, a juice box, or glucose tablets in case you experience hypoglycemia while on the go
- Continue to stick to your diabetes plan. Make sure to see your endocrinologist or Primary Care Physician regularly. Consider seeing a Certified Diabetes Educator (CDE) for further information on diabetes management.

**In good health,**

*Courtney Darsa, MS, RD, CDE, CDN*