

Sugar Levels

Checking your blood sugar

- ♦ Blood glucose (blood sugar) monitoring can be a key tool to check your diabetes control. This check tells you your blood glucose level at any one time.
- ♦ Keeping a log of your results is vital. When you bring this record to your health care provider, you have a good picture of your body's response to your diabetes care plan.
- ♦ “Fasting” blood glucose checks mean you are testing your glucose level after you have not eaten for 8 to 12 hours (usually overnight). Usually, “fasting” glucose levels are checked first thing after waking up in the morning, before eating or drinking anything (except water).



Artem Podrez (photographer). Healthy Person Fashion [Digital image]. Retrieved from [//www.pexels.com/photo/healthy-fashion-person-people-6823519](http://www.pexels.com/photo/healthy-fashion-person-people-6823519)

How do I check?

1. After washing your hands, insert a test strip into your meter.
2. Use your lancing device on the side of your fingertip to get a drop of blood.
3. Touch and hold the edge of the test strip to the drop of blood, and wait for the result.
4. Your blood glucose level will appear on the meter's display.



Ron Lach (photographer). Food. Cold. Wood. Man. [Digital image]. Retrieved from [//www.pexels.com/photo/food-cold-wood-man-9145352](http://www.pexels.com/photo/food-cold-wood-man-9145352)

Note: All meters are slightly different, so always refer to your user's manual for specific instructions.

Other tips for checking blood sugar:

- ♦ With some meters, you can also use your forearm, thigh, or fleshy part of your hand.
- ♦ There are spring-loaded lancing devices that make sticking yourself less painful.
- ♦ If you use your fingertip, stick the side of your fingertip by your fingernail to avoid having sore spots on the frequently used part of your finger.

Problems using your glucometer (blood sugar meter)

If you are having trouble using your glucometer, call the toll free number on the back of your meter. Or, contact your primary care team.

If your meter is giving you an error message or not working properly, sometimes replacing the battery will help.



Andrea Piacquadio (photographer). Man Having a Phone Call. [Digital image]. Retrieved from [//www.pexels.com/photo/man-having-a-phone-call-in-front-of-a-laptop-859264](https://www.pexels.com/photo/man-having-a-phone-call-in-front-of-a-laptop-859264)

Low sugars

Low blood sugar is also called low blood glucose, hypoglycemia, or an insulin reaction.

A blood sugar less than 70 mg/dl is generally considered low. However, it is important to talk to your health care provider about your individual blood glucose targets, and what level is too low for you.

Why can low sugars happen?

- ◆ Not enough food in the body because a meal was too small, missed, or delayed too long.
- ◆ Too much insulin for the amount of sugar present in the blood.
- ◆ Insulin or oral medicine regimen is more than needed to control the blood sugar.
- ◆ Increase in physical activity or burst of exercise.

Signs and symptoms of low sugar

A reaction can happen **QUICKLY** over a few minutes

Hypoglycemic symptoms are important clues that you have low blood glucose. Each person's reaction to hypoglycemia is different, so it's important that you learn your own signs and symptoms when your blood glucose is low.



Kindel Media (photographer). Woman in Pain. [Digital image]. Retrieved from [//www.pexels.com/photo/woman-in-pain-due-to-headache-7298673/](https://www.pexels.com/photo/woman-in-pain-due-to-headache-7298673/)

Sometimes the symptoms of low blood sugar are similar to the symptoms of other illnesses:

- √ Shakiness
- √ Hunger
- √ Lightheadedness, feeling dizzy
- √ Confusion/being unable to concentrate
- √ Glassy stare
- √ Cold clammy sweat
- √ Headache
- √ Change in behavior (irritability, crying, sleepiness)
- √ Numbness or tingling around mouth
- √ Pale skin color
- √ Clumsy or jerky movements (if severe)
- √ Seizure (if severe)

During sleeping hours, signs of low sugar may be:

- √ Trouble falling asleep
- √ Restless sleep
- √ Bed covers/pajamas damp from sweat
- √ Nightmares or bizarre dreams
- √ Headache upon waking



SHVETS production (photographer). Man Lying on Sofa [Digital image]. Retrieved from [//www.pexels.com/photo/a-sick-elderly-man-lying-down-on-sofa-while-holding-a-drinking-glass-8900025/](https://www.pexels.com/photo/a-sick-elderly-man-lying-down-on-sofa-while-holding-a-drinking-glass-8900025/)

The only sure way to know whether you are experiencing hypoglycemia is to check your blood glucose, if possible.

If you have these symptoms and you do not have the equipment to check your sugar at home, you may want to contact your primary care team to find out how to get started with a home glucometer.

How to treat low sugars

1. **Stop activity.**
2. **Check blood sugar.** At times, you may feel like you are having a low blood sugar reaction even though you are not.

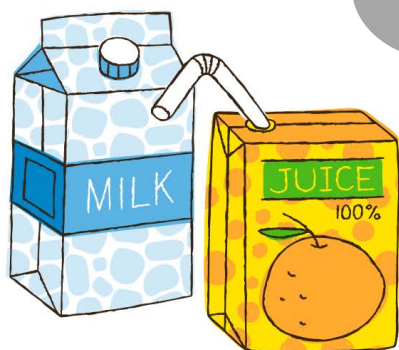
If you are experiencing symptoms of low blood sugar, and you are unable to check your blood glucose for any reason, treat for hypoglycemia.

3. If blood sugar is **70 or below**, **eat/drink ONE** of the following carbohydrate foods:

½ cup apple juice	2 Tablespoons raisins
½ cup orange juice	3 sugar cubes
1/3 cup grape juice	3 teaspoons sugar in 1 cup water
1 cup low fat milk	8 sugared lifesavers
½ cup regular pop	3 glucose tablets (95 grams each)

4. **Rest for 15 minutes.**
5. **Recheck blood sugar.** Keep treating and checking your blood sugar every 15 minutes until it is above 70.

Note: If you are alone and not getting results from following these treatments, and you continue to feel the symptoms of low blood sugar, call 911 immediately.



skechify (creator). Milk [Digital image]. Retrieved from [//www.canva.com/media/MAEHFsLjfiY](https://www.canva.com/media/MAEHFsLjfiY)

skechify (creator). Juice [Digital image]. Retrieved from [//www.canva.com/media/MAEHF15JCRM](https://www.canva.com/media/MAEHF15JCRM)

6. Once your blood sugar is above 70: Eat a snack IF one or more hours will go by before your next meal or snack. The snack should contain 1 serving of carbohydrate and 1 serving protein/meat. It's very important to not over treat low blood sugar by eating too much sugary food because that can cause sugars to go above the healthy range.

Carbohydrate choices	Protein choices
1 slice bread	1 oz lean meat or cheese
3 graham crackers	1 tablespoon peanut butter
6 saltines	¼ cup low fat cottage cheese
¾ cup cold cereal	1 cup low fat milk

7. **Recheck** your blood sugar in 1 hour to make sure it has stayed above 70.
8. If low blood sugar is a continued problem, contact your provider. Your medication regimen may need to be changed.
9. If you are prone to low blood sugar, you should carry one of the carbohydrate foods listed with you.
10. You should not drive when your blood sugar is low.



Pixabay (photographer). No Car Allowed [Digital image]. Retrieved from [//www.canva.com/media/MAEFnz7Gzr4](https://www.canva.com/media/MAEFnz7Gzr4)

High sugars

Having high blood sugar is also called **hyperglycemia**.

Ask your medical team what your targets are for your sugar levels, and what is considered too high for you.

High blood sugar can be caused by:

- ♦ eating or drinking too much carbohydrate
- ♦ changes in diabetes medication regimen
- ♦ skipping or forgetting to take diabetes medications
- ♦ exercising less than usual
- ♦ being sick

Fasting blood sugar readings are readings you take in the morning before you eat or drink anything with calories. If your sugar is high first thing in the morning, it may continue to run high throughout the day. Some possible reasons for occasional high fasting sugars are: skipping diabetes medication, more carbohydrates than usual the prior evening, or eating later in the evening.

If blood sugars are routinely high it may mean that the diabetes regimen needs to be adjusted by the patient's medical team.



Natalia Vaitkevich (photographer). Healthy Woman Hand. [Digital image]. Retrieved from [//www.pexels.com/photo/food-healthy-woman-hand-6941100/](https://www.pexels.com/photo/food-healthy-woman-hand-6941100/)

Signs and symptoms of high blood sugar

People do not always have symptoms when their blood sugar is too high.

Symptoms can include:

- ♦ frequent urination
- ♦ increased thirst
- ♦ blurry vision
- ♦ fatigue

If you have these symptoms regularly and you don't have a way to check your sugar levels at home, you may want to contact your primary care team to find out how to get started with a home glucometer.



Mikhail Nilov (photographer). Man Drinking Water [Digital image]. Retrieved from [//www.pexels.com/photo/man-drinking-a-bottle-of-water-6740570/](https://www.pexels.com/photo/man-drinking-a-bottle-of-water-6740570/)