



Getting to Know the Signs of Hypoglycemia

A Patient Education Resource from The National Diabetes Education Initiative® (NDEI®)

This handout will help you to understand the signs of hypoglycemia and what you can do to prevent it.

What is hypoglycemia?

Hypoglycemia is another word for low blood glucose. It means that there is too much insulin and not enough glucose (sugar) in the blood.

Hypoglycemia happens when blood glucose gets too low—usually, this means it is below 70 milligrams per deciliter (mg/dL). The level may be different for some people, so talk with your healthcare provider about the right number for you.

Why does hypoglycemia happen?

Hypoglycemia usually happens in people who take insulin or some kinds of pills for their diabetes. It can happen if you:

- Take too much of your diabetes medication
- Go for too long without eating
- Don't eat enough
- Exercise more than you usually do
- Drink alcohol without food

What are the signs of hypoglycemia?

Different people have different signs, or *symptoms*, of hypoglycemia. Also, symptoms are different depending on how low the blood glucose is.

Look at the list of hypoglycemia symptoms.  If you notice these symptoms, it's important to take action right away. That's because hypoglycemia can be very serious if it's not taken care of quickly.



Signs of Hypoglycemia

Mild hypoglycemia

- Shakiness or trembling
- Sweating
- Dizziness
- Moodiness or grouchiness
- Anxiety or worry
- Headache
- Hunger
- Inability to think clearly

Severe hypoglycemia

- Blurry vision or double vision
- Confusion
- Extreme tiredness
- Seizures or convulsions
- Unconsciousness (passing out)

Talk with your family, friends, and co-workers about what signs to look for. That way, they can help you if you can't treat yourself.



**FOR MORE INFORMATION:
TALK WITH YOUR HEALTHCARE PROVIDER**

REFERENCES: Mayo Clinic. Diabetic hypoglycemia. <http://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/diabetic-hypoglycemia/basics/definition/con-20034680?p=1>. Accessed January 25, 2016. • American Diabetes Association. Standards of medical care in diabetes—2016. *Diabetes Care*. 2015;39(suppl 1):S44. • American Diabetes Association. Hypoglycemia (low blood sugar). <http://www.diabetes.org/living-with-diabetes/treatment-and-care/blood-glucose-control/hypoglycemia-low-blood.html>. Accessed January 25, 2016.

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