



BASIC INFORMATION

DESCRIPTION

Hypoglycemia means low blood sugar. When blood sugar drops too far below normal, a group of symptoms develop. Signs and symptoms vary in different people. Get to know your signs and symptoms. Also, your daytime symptoms may vary from those that occur at night.

FREQUENT SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

Mild:

- Hunger.
- Weakness.
- Nervousness.
- Emotional ups and downs.
- Difficulty in concentrating.
- Sweating.
- Headache.

Moderately severe:

- Increased weakness.
- Excessive perspiration.
- Skin that is cold and clammy to touch.
- Numbness about the mouth, and sometimes, fingers.
- Pounding of heart.
- Loss of memory.
- Double vision.
- Staring expression.
- Difficulty walking.
- Unaware of surroundings.

Severe:

- Twitching of muscles.
- Unconsciousness.
- Convulsions.
- Unaware of passing urine.

CAUSES

Hypoglycemia occurs when there is too much insulin in the body and not enough intake of food. It is more frequent in insulin-dependent type diabetes.

RISK INCREASES WITH

- Eating meals at times other than regular hours.
- Skipping meals or eating only parts of meals.
- Dosing with too much insulin or certain other diabetic drugs.
- More exercise or activity than usual.
- Alcohol use.
- Other, rarer risk factors.

PREVENTIVE MEASURES

- It is important to follow your treatment plan of diet, drugs, and exercise, and do regular blood sugar testing.
- Take prompt action if early symptoms of hypoglycemia occur. Family, friends, and co-workers should know the symptoms and what to do in an emergency.
- Always carry some type of sugar with you.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

Full recovery is the usual outcome. It depends on quick diagnosis and treatment.

POSSIBLE COMPLICATIONS

- Diabetic shock or seizures.
- Permanent brain damage.



DIAGNOSIS & TREATMENT

GENERAL MEASURES

- If hypoglycemia symptoms begin, eat or drink something that has sugar in it. This includes hard candy, fruit juice, or glucose tablets that you can buy at a drug store. If there are 30 minutes or more to the next meal, some protein and starch foods should also be eaten. They can help prevent another reaction.
- If the patient passes out, glucagon needs to be injected. Diabetic patients and their families should have glucagon at hand and know how to inject it.
- Check blood sugar about 15 to 20 minutes after treatment for hypoglycemia. Repeat treatment if needed.
- If no glucagon is at hand, get the patient to the nearest emergency center or telephone for emergency help.
- To learn more: Contact the local or national office of the American Diabetes Association, Attn: National Call Center, 1701 Beauregard St., Alexandria, VA 22311; (800) 342-2383; website: www.diabetes.org.

MEDICATIONS

Try to find the cause of the hypoglycemia. The insulin dose may need to be adjusted.

ACTIVITY

Rest until symptoms resolve.

DIET

Maintain your regular diet, unless eating habits are the cause of the hypoglycemia. Changes may need to be made in your diet.



NOTIFY OUR OFFICE IF

- You or a family member has symptoms of hypoglycemia that are not controlled by simple measures.
- Attacks are recurring.
- Changes need to be made in insulin dosages.

Special notes:
