

# Signs and Symptoms of Hypoglycemia

***Please keep this card, or a photocopy, with you in the classroom.***

## What is hypoglycemia?

Hypoglycemia happens when the amount of blood glucose in the body has dropped below 4 mmol/L.

**Hypoglycemia is an emergency situation. It can happen within minutes of the youth appearing healthy and normal, so it is important to take care of it right away.**

If blood glucose levels drop very low the youth may:

- Become confused and disoriented
- Lose consciousness
- Have a seizure

## What causes hypoglycemia?

Hypoglycemia can be caused by:

- More physical activity than usual
- Not eating on time
- Missing or delaying meals
- Taking too much insulin

If blood glucose levels do drop very low, your assistance might be needed. Encourage the youth to always wear their MedicAlert® or other emergency identification in case of an emergency like this.

## What are the signs of hypoglycemia?

- cold, clammy or sweaty skin
- pallor
- difficulty concentrating
- shakiness, lack of coordination (e.g. deterioration in writing or printing skills)
- irritability, hostility, and poor behaviour
- a staggering gait
- fatigue
- nervousness
- excessive hunger
- headache
- blurred vision and dizziness
- abdominal pain or nausea
- fainting and unconsciousness

## What about hyperglycemia?

Hyperglycemia happens when blood glucose levels are higher than the youth's target range. The youth will be thirsty, urinate more often and be tired. Emergency treatment is generally not required, but if you suspect hyperglycemia, refer to the parent's instructions on the *Kid with Diabetes Information* card.

***Emergency treatment of hypoglycemia is on the reverse side of this card.***



# Emergency Treatment of Hypoglycemia

***Please keep this card, or a photocopy, with you in the classroom.***

## **DO NOT give food or drink if the student is:**

- unconscious
- having a seizure or
- unable to swallow

## **DO**

- roll the student on his/her side
- call 9-1-1 or emergency medical services
- contact the parent or guardian identified on the Kid with Diabetes Information card

- If the next meal is more than one hour away, or the youth is going to be active, ensure that the student eats a snack, such as a half-sandwich or cheese and crackers (something with 15 grams of carbohydrate and a protein source.)

If you are unsure whether the youth is hypoglycemic, always give sugar! A temporary excess of sugar will not harm the youth, but hypoglycemia is potentially serious.

It may take some coaxing to get the youth to eat or drink but you must insist. Usually their next regular meal or snack is adequate.

Don't leave the youth unsupervised until recovery is complete. The youth can then resume regular class-work. **It is imperative that the youth be accompanied by a responsible person if they go home.**

Parents should be notified of all incidents of hypoglycemia. Repeated low blood glucose levels are undesirable and unnecessary and should be drawn to the parent's attention so that they can discuss the problem with their doctor.

## **Emergency medical identification**

MedicAlert®, or other emergency medical identification, can help speed up treatment and diagnosis. Check for a bracelet/necklet on an unresponsive person. Immediate treatment can be aided by the crucial medical information found on the back of the jewellery.

## **Treatment of hypoglycemia**

**Do not leave the student alone. It is imperative at the first sign of hypoglycemia to give sugar immediately.**

If the parents have not provided you with more specific instructions, give the youth:

- 15 g of glucose in the form of glucose tablets
- 15 mL (3 teaspoons) or 3 packets of table sugar dissolved in water
- 175 mL (3/4 cup) of juice or regular soft drink
- 6 Life Savers® (1=2.5 g of carbohydrate)
- 15 mL (1 tablespoon) of honey

Wait 10 to 15 minutes, if there is no improvement

- Treat again

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**Know who to turn to**



**1-800-BANTING (226-8464) [www.diabetes.ca](http://www.diabetes.ca)**

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