

Treatment of Hypoglycemia

After checking blood glucose and verifying it is <70 mg/dL:

- Take 15 grams of glucose or fast-acting carbohydrate:
 - 3–4 glucose tablets (depends on the brand; check label for grams/tablet)
 - 1 tube of glucose gel (15 grams)
 - 4 ounces of regular juice or soda
 - 1 cup of skim milk
- Eating chocolate candy, cookies, or ice cream is not helpful as they contain fat, which will slow down the absorption of the carbohydrate.
- Eating a specific amount of glucose or carbohydrate (15 grams) will bring the blood glucose up about 45–50 points, but will prevent it from going too high.
- Treat with 15 grams of glucose, check blood glucose 10–15 minutes later. If coming up, no further glucose is necessary. If still <70 mg/dL, take 15 grams more.
- If next meal is more than 30–60 minutes away, will need to treat with snack (carbohydrate and protein) such as 4–6 crackers and 1 ounce of cheese.

Glucagon

- Insulin dependent patients need instruction on use of glucagon.
- Glucagon requires a prescription.
- Glucagon is used ONLY for hypoglycemic episode that has resulted in loss of consciousness. Person with diabetes will never be giving it to themselves.
- Family member, friend or coworker will give the glucagon injection in an emergency situation when patient has passed out due to severe low blood glucose.
- This is an emergency. Call 911.
- Patient and family members need instruction on how to use.
- Kit comes with powder glucagon, diluent and a syringe. Pull back all diluent and inject into vial of powdered glucagon. Mix. Pull back all fluid from vial and inject into thigh or arm.
- Glucagon will cause liver to release glucose and patient should respond in approximately 10 minutes.
- Glucagon is quick-acting. Need to follow with carbohydrate.
- Glucagon can cause nausea/vomiting.
- Need EMS to be called for safe management.

American Association of Diabetes Educators, A Core Curriculum for Diabetes Education – Diabetes Management Therapies 5th edition, 2003.

Optimizing glycemic control and improving outcomes in type 2 diabetes
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