

# Hypoglycemia low blood sugar in adults

## What are the signs?

Blood sugar below 3.9 is considered low. Each person will have their own way of recognizing low blood sugar.

Some of the signs include:



Severity

Sweating	Trembling	Palpitations	Anxiety
Hunger	Nausea	Headache	Tingling
Disturbed sleep	Weird dreams	Weakness/dizziness	Difficulty concentrating
Vision changes	Drowsiness	Difficulty speaking	Unconsciousness

## Why does low blood sugar happen?

Have you:

- Eaten less than planned?
- Eaten later than normal?
- Taken more medication than planned?
- Been more active than planned?
- Drunk any alcohol within the past 24 hours?

**Fear of lows is common and may cause excess anxiety, stress, reducing the ability to function and quality of life. If you are having lows, speak with your diabetes health-care team:**

- Doctor • Nurse practitioner • Pharmacist
- Nurse • Dietitian

## How to take action

**If able to swallow, EAT fast-acting sugar**



15 g of glucose in the form of glucose tablets



1 tablespoon (15 mL) of honey



1 tablespoon (15 mL) sugar in water



2/3 cup (150 mL) of juice or regular soft drink



15 g fast-acting sugar (e.g. 6 Life Savers® or 2 rolls Rocket Candy)

**With more severe signs** (affecting mental/physical ability):

- If able to swallow → EAT 20g fast-acting sugar
- If unable to swallow → GIVE 3 mg glucagon intranasal or 1 mg SC/IM



**WAIT 15 minutes and CHECK**



If blood sugar is 3.9 mmol/L or **ABOVE** **AND** next meal is **in the hour**



If blood sugar is 3.9 mmol/L or **ABOVE** **AND** next meal is **LONGER than 1 hour away**

If blood sugar is **BELOW** 3.9 mmol/L **REPEAT steps above**



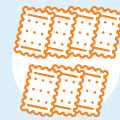
**Eat ONE of:**  
**Starch:**

ex. 7 crackers OR 1 slice of bread

**AND**

**Protein:**

ex. 1 piece of cheese OR 2 tablespoons of peanut butter



**Are you Driving?**

**After** treating a low, **Wait** until your blood sugar is above 5 mmol/L to start driving. Your brain might need up to 40 minutes to recover before you can safely drive again.

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**DIABETES CANADA**