

# WCU DIABETES EDUCATION SUMMIT

Hypoglycemia

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# HYPOGLYCEMIA

Hypoglycemia is a condition characterized by abnormally low blood glucose, usually less than 70mg/dl. It may also be called “insulin reaction” or “insulin shock”.

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## Signs and Symptoms

Shakiness

Sweating

Irritability

Confusion delirium

Lightheadedness

Hunger

Sleepiness

Tingling or numbness

Weakness

Anger

Sadness

Nightmares

Nervousness or anxiety

Chills and clamminess

Impatience

Rapid/fast heartbeat

Dizziness

Nausea

Blurred/impaired vision

Headaches

Fatigue

Stubbornness

Lack of coordination

Seizures Unconsciousness

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The only sure way to know whether you are experiencing hypoglycemia is to check your blood glucose, if possible. If you are experiencing symptoms and you are unable to check your blood glucose for any reason, treat the hypoglycemia.

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## Treatment

Consume 15-20 grams of glucose or simple carbohydrates Recheck blood glucose after 15 minutes If hypoglycemia continues, repeat. Once blood glucose returns to normal, eat a small snack if your next planned meal or snack is more than an hour or two away.

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## Examples of 15 gram Carbohydrate Sources

- ⦿ Glucose tablets
- ⦿ Glucose gel
- ⦿ 2 tablespoons of raisins
- ⦿ (1/2 cup) of juice or regular soda (not diet)
- ⦿ 1 tablespoon sugar, honey, or corn syrup
- ⦿ 8 ounces of nonfat or 1% milk
- ⦿ hard candies, jellybeans, or gumdrops

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## Glucagon

- Inject glucagon into the individual's buttock, arm or thigh, following the manufacturer's instructions.
- When the individual regains consciousness (usually in 5-15 minutes), they may experience nausea and vomiting.
- If glucagon has been used, discuss ways to prevent severe hypoglycemia in the future.

## Do not:

- Inject insulin (will lower blood glucose even more)
- Provide food or fluids (individual can choke)
- Put hands in mouth (individual can choke)

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## Hypoglycemia Unawareness

Very often, hypoglycemia symptoms occur when blood glucose levels fall below 70 mg/dl. But, many people have blood glucose readings below this level and feel no symptoms. This is called hypoglycemia unawareness.



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Hypoglycemia unawareness occurs more frequently in those who:

- ◉ Frequently have low blood glucose episodes (which can cause you to stop sensing the early warning signs of hypoglycemia)
- ◉ Have had diabetes for a long time
- ◉ Tightly control their diabetes (which increases your chances of having low blood glucose reactions)

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## Prevention and Precautions

- ⦿ Raise target glucose range in patients who have hypoglycemia unawareness
- ⦿ Diabetes Identification
- ⦿ Medication Management
- ⦿ Avoid skipping meals or eating too little
- ⦿ Keep fast acting glucose on hand
- ⦿ Monitor glucose in regards to exercise

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## References:

American Diabetes Association

[www.diabetes.org](http://www.diabetes.org)

# THANK YOU!

- Questions??