

Understanding Hypoglycemia (Low Blood Glucose)

When you have diabetes and taking certain diabetes medications or insulin, your blood glucose can also fall too low.

Low blood glucose, or hypoglycemia, occurs when your blood glucose level drops below 70 milligrams per deciliter. This can be serious, especially if it causes you to pass out.

“A couple of times I had glucose too low, and that was really a strange experience, because usually I tend to even go a little higher, but the low one was I just felt a little shaky. I was not really feeling good at all.”

Hypoglycemia may be a side effect of some oral medications. It can also occur when any oral medication is taken in combination with insulin, or if insulin is taken by itself.

Hypoglycemia develops when the parts of your management plan become out of balance.

Your blood glucose level can drop below your target range if you skip a meal or don't eat enough carbohydrates, if you exercise more than usual, or if the type or amount of your medication needs adjusting.

When this happens, your body doesn't get the energy it needs to function.

Symptoms you might experience include: headache, weakness, a cold sweat or clammy feeling, shakiness, hunger, irritability, and dizziness.

If you ignore it, hypoglycemia can get worse and you can pass out.

“It's very important to carry a treatment for hypoglycemia on your person so that if you either begin to get symptoms like you're foggy-headed, that you're confused or you have difficulty with coordination even to check your blood sugar, you know you need a treatment, that you don't have to walk or move anywhere to get that treatment.”

The best way to avoid hypoglycemia is to take your medications as directed as well as following the other parts of your management plan, like eating the right amount of foods at the right time and getting into a routine of physical activity.

Don't forget to learn all you can about the parts of your management plan, so you understand how they all work together to keep your blood glucose in your target range.

Although Diabetes is complex, it's manageable when you have the right information and support. Diabetes Care and Education Specialists are trained to be your diabetes expert and can help you learn how to successfully thrive with diabetes. You deserve nothing less!

Ask your provider for a referral today! Find one at www.DiabetesEducator.org/find