

Learning About Glucagon

Low blood sugar—or hypoglycemia— can happen to anyone who has diabetes and takes insulin or certain types of diabetes medicines.

It can happen for a lot of reasons, like skipping a meal, exercising more than usual, or taking too much insulin.

Most of the time, eating or drinking something that contains sugar is enough to bring your blood sugar up.

But if your blood sugar drops very low, you need glucagon.

Glucagon is a prescription medicine that raises blood sugar quickly.

It can be used during a low blood sugar emergency when someone is unconscious or is unable to safely eat or drink something with sugar.

Your doctor may prescribe this medicine if you are at risk of having low blood sugar.

Glucagon comes in several different forms.

It can be given as a shot using a small syringe or an injector pen. It's also available as a nasal spray.

Glucagon comes with instructions that show you how to use it.

Keep the instructions with the medicine so that they're easy to find if you need them.

Make sure to follow the directions on how to store your glucagon.

Keep it in the original packaging. Don't store glucagon in a place where the medicine might freeze or get very hot, like inside your car.

And remember to check the expiration date on the package.

Glucagon may not work well if it's expired, so be sure to replace it before that date.

Keep in mind that if your blood sugar goes very low, it's likely that you'll need someone else to give you the glucagon.

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So tell the people close to you about glucagon. Talk to them about how and when to use it.

And show them where you keep it so that they can find it quickly in an emergency.

And if you have to use glucagon, it's important to talk to your doctor afterward.

Your doctor can help you figure out what caused the low blood sugar.

And, if needed, you can work together to adjust your diabetes treatment plan to help avoid very low blood sugar in the future.

Blood sugar isn't always predictable. That's why it's important to have glucagon on hand.

Being prepared can give you—and the people who care about you—peace of mind.