

What Should My Blood Glucose Numbers Be?

According to the American Diabetes Association, if you have diabetes, the following are recommendations for blood glucose (sugar) levels:

- Before meals 70 - 130 mg/dL
- 1-2 hrs after start of a meal- under 180 mg/dL
- A1C below 7%

There are many reasons why your blood glucose level may be out of range. The important thing is to try to figure out why this may be happening so that you can take steps to correct the problem or prevent it in the future. Your health care provider or diabetes educator can help you to look at what is happening, see if there is a pattern and offer suggestions for steps you can take to help resolve the issue.

Causes of High Blood Glucose

- Missing a dose or not taking enough of your diabetes medicine
- Inactivity
- Eating a meal or snack with too much carbohydrate
- Stress
- Illness
- Hormonal changes

Symptoms of High Blood Glucose

Often the symptoms that come with high blood glucose levels may be very subtle or you may not have any symptoms at all. The signs of high blood glucose are often how a person feels when they

are diagnosed with diabetes: fatigue, increased thirst, weight loss, frequent urination, blurred vision and increased appetite, to name a few.

Causes of Low Blood Glucose

- Not enough food or fewer carbohydrates than usual
- Skipping or delaying meals or snacks
- Taking too much of your diabetes medicine
- Doing extra activity, more or longer than usual
- Drinking alcohol and not eating

Warning Signs of Low Blood Glucose

A person experiencing a “low blood sugar” may have symptoms which can include feeling dizzy, sweaty, shaky, lightheaded, hungry, weak, confused, anxious, tired, irritable or nauseous. You may also feel your heart pounding or have a headache. Not all people feel the same when their blood glucose is low. Some people don’t feel any symptoms when their blood glucose is dropping. If left untreated, low blood glucose can make you pass out. Make sure a friend or family member understands your signs of low blood glucose and how to treat it in case you are unable to do so and that they know how to contact emergency medical services. If you are unconscious, they should never try to give you anything by mouth.

How to prevent and treat high blood glucose

PREVENTION

- Take your medicine as directed
- Stick to your meal plan
- Be physically active
- Find ways to cope with stress
- Get prompt treatment of illness or infections

TREATMENT

- Follow the plan you set up with your health care provider
- Drink extra sugar-free fluids & limit snacks
- You may need extra medicine, discuss this with your doctor
- Extra activity unless contraindicated*

**If you have type 1 diabetes, always check your urine for ketones before exercising if your blood glucose is over 240 mg/dl. Ketones are a substance produced when your body burns fat instead of glucose for energy. Exercise in the presence of ketones can actually make your high glucose level worsen. Contact your health care provider if you have moderate to large amounts of ketones in your urine since this can lead to more serious problems.*

Tips

How to Prevent and Treat Low Blood Glucose

- Don’t skip or delay meals
- Include carbohydrates in your meal plan
- Check your blood glucose and eat a snack if necessary before activity
- Take the prescribed amount of medicine each day. Use reminders so that you don’t repeat a dose you’ve already taken.
- Don’t drink alcohol on an empty stomach

Treating Low Blood Glucose

It is very important that you treat low blood glucose as soon as you feel any symptoms. Your blood glucose level may continue to drop until you do something to raise it. Not everyone feels the same symptoms when their blood glucose is low so test your blood glucose if you can and learn how your body lets you know your glucose is low.

If your blood glucose is below your target range (usually below 70):

- Eat or drink something with about 15 grams of carbohydrate (see below)
- Wait 15 minutes and check your blood glucose again
- If your blood glucose is still below your target or you are not feeling better, eat or drink something again with 15 grams of carbohydrate and retest in 15 minutes
- Once your blood glucose level is above your target range, have a snack or meal to prevent further low blood glucose.

- Know the signs and causes of high and low blood glucose levels
- Have sugar-free fluids available for treatment of high blood glucose
- Keep an emergency source of carbohydrate/sugar available to treat low glucose levels handy
- Wear medical identification stating you have diabetes
- Talk to your health care provider about changes that may be needed in your treatment plan to help prevent highs and lows in glucose levels

Remember

Foods to Help Treat Low Blood Glucose

- 2-3 glucose tablets
- 1/2 cup of regular soda
- 5-6 pieces of hard candy
- 1 tablespoon of sugar
- 1 cup of milk

