



WELLNESS BULLETIN

BLOOD SUGAR MANAGEMENT

California Department of Developmental Services

MARCH 2024



Is this bulletin useful?

Managing the level of sugar in your blood (blood sugar) is very important. You do not want your blood sugar to be too high or too low. Either one can make you really sick right away, or unhealthy later in life. Here are some tips to help keep your blood sugar levels healthy. Sources: [CDC](#), [Mayo Clinic](#)

What is Blood Sugar and Why is it Important?

Blood sugar, also known as blood glucose, is the sugar that is in your blood that gives your body energy. Sugar in your blood comes from the food you eat. Most bodies work all the time to keep your blood sugar levels in a healthy range.

Your body makes a hormone called insulin to help control how your body uses and stores blood sugar. People with diabetes have problems making insulin which makes their blood sugar levels build up to unhealthy levels.

Source: [Cleveland Clinic](#)



Wellness and Safety Bulletins are produced by the Department of Developmental Services to alert individuals, families, and others to specific risks identified with our community. Please provide feedback on this bulletin and what we can do better through this survey: [Bulletin Survey](#)

Why Do I Need to Manage My Blood Sugar?

Blood sugar is important to manage. Too much or too little blood sugar can cause serious health problems. If your blood sugar levels get too low, you can lose the ability to think and act normally. If your blood sugar levels get too high and stay high, they can cause damage to your body over time.

Source: [American Diabetes Association](#)



Keeping Your Blood Sugar in a Normal Range

Here are some things you can do to keep your blood sugar under control:

Stay a healthy weight. Talk with your doctor about what your weight should be.

Eat fresh fruits and vegetables. Avoid processed or packaged foods. [See Prevention and Wellness: Healthy Diet bulletin.](#)

Have your meals at the same times each day. Do not skip meals.

Exercise regularly.

Try getting at least 20-25 minutes of physical activity every day. [See Prevention and Wellness: Physical Health bulletin.](#)

Avoid sugary drinks like soda or juice. Water is the healthiest thing you can drink!

Don't drink a lot of alcohol, it has a lot of sugar in it.

Source: [CDC](#)

Low Blood Sugar (Hypoglycemia)

Low blood sugar has many causes, including:

Missing a meal

What you eat, including how much fat, protein, and fiber are in a meal.

Your insulin levels. For people who take insulin for diabetes management:

Taking too much insulin

Not eating enough carbohydrates (or carbs) for how much insulin you take.

Timing of when insulin is taken

Exercising more than usual or for longer or harder than usual.

Spending time at high altitudes

Humid and hot weather

Menstruation

Signs of low blood sugar are different for everyone. Common symptoms include:

Shaking

Sweating

Nervousness or anxiety

Irritability or confusion

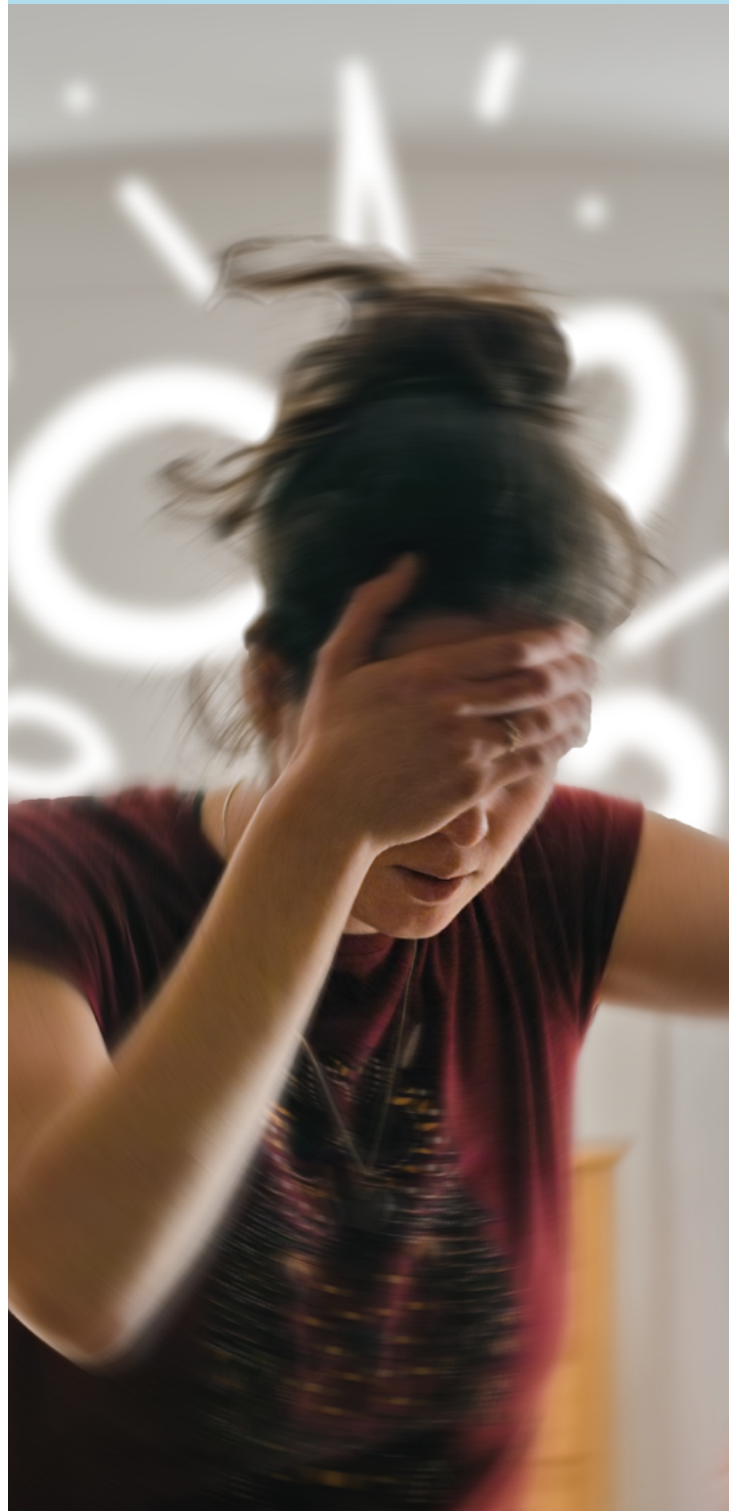
Dizziness or lightheadedness

Feeling tired or weak

Hunger or nausea

Irregular or fast heartbeat

Tingling or numbness of the lips, tongue, or cheek



Low Blood Sugar (continued)

Low blood sugar can be dangerous and should be treated immediately. If you are diabetic or know you can have low blood sugar, know what your symptoms are so you can identify the signs early and treat it. Talk to your support team and doctor about what you can eat or drink if you are experiencing low blood sugar.

If you feel like your blood sugar is low, immediately eat or drink something and talk with your support team. Then, wait 15 minutes and see if you are feeling better. If you have a glucose monitor, check your blood sugar level after 15 minutes. Blood sugar takes time to rise after eating or drinking. Give it time to work.

Source: [CDC](#); [CDC](#); [Mayo Clinic](#); DDS Clinical Services



When to Call 911

Call 911 anytime you are concerned about having really low blood sugar.

If your blood sugar stays too low 20 minutes after you have eaten something or had something to drink or your usual treatment is not working.

Talk to your doctor about your unique needs and what to do in an emergency.

You may need special equipment (a glucose monitor or glucometer) or emergency medicine (glucagon) to have on hand in case of an emergency.

If you think you have low blood sugar or are diabetic, talk to a medical professional about how to check your blood sugar level, even if you do not have symptoms. Blood sugar monitors or continuous glucose monitors (CGMs) are tools used to help check blood sugar.

Source: [CDC](#); [CDC](#); [Mayo Clinic](#); DDS Clinical Services

High Blood Sugar (Hyperglycemia)

If glucose levels get too high and stay high, it can cause damage or complications to the body over time. Many things can cause high blood sugar, including:

- Being sick.
- Being stressed.
- Eating more than planned.
- If you are diabetic, not getting enough insulin, or taking oral medications for diabetes.

Signs of high blood sugar may be different for everyone. Common symptoms include:

- Feeling very tired.
- Feeling thirsty.
- Having blurry vision.
- Needing to urinate more often.

Source: [CDC](#)

If you have high blood sugar, talk to your doctor about how to keep it within a healthy range.



Additional Resources



[Prevention & Wellness:
Healthy Diet \(ca.gov\)](#)



[Prevention & Wellness:
Physical Health \(ca.gov\)](#)