

Hypoglycemia “Rule of 15/15”

“Rule of 15/15” is an easy way to remember how to treat low glucose.

1) Check your blood glucose:

If your blood glucose is 70-100mg/dL and you are symptomatic (sweaty, shaky, hungry, irritable, tired) or your blood glucose is less than 70mg/dL, take 15 grams of fast acting carbohydrates*.

*Examples of fast acting carbohydrates are:

3-4 glucose tablets OR 1 tube glucose gel OR 1 cup non-fat milk OR 6oz regular soda OR 4oz (1/2 cup) fruit juice OR 5 lifesavers OR 2 tablespoons of raisins or 2 teaspoons of sugar or honey.

2) Wait 15 minutes and then recheck your blood glucose. If your blood glucose is not up to 100mg/dL, then repeat the above treatment.

If the symptoms of low blood glucose are gone but it is more than 1 hour away from your meal time, eat a snack of 1 starch and 1 protein such as 1/2 sandwich OR 1oz cheese and 6 crackers OR 1 tbsp peanut butter and 6 crackers OR 4oz non-fat milk and 2 graham crackers.

Special Notes: Symptoms of Hypoglycemia with normal or high blood sugar.

If you have had high blood sugars for several weeks, your body will adapt and “get used to” these values. When blood sugar is treated and returns to more normal levels, symptoms of low blood sugar can occur even with normal blood sugars values (>70mg/dL). This condition is not dangerous and does not require treatment, as long as the blood sugar stays above 60mg/dL. In fact, it is best to try not to treat these symptoms as much as possible. This will allow the body to “reset” and eventually these symptoms will not occur with normal blood sugar

values anymore. If you must eat because the symptoms are too severe, try to eat as little as possible to make the symptoms tolerable (try 10-15grams of carbohydrates or less). If you always eat enough to return the blood sugar to high values, the symptoms with normal sugar values will not go away and you will not be able to have good control of you blood sugar.

Hypoglycemia unawareness

If you have had frequent low blood sugar reactions, you may not develop typical symptoms (a condition called hypoglycemia unawareness and instead develop confusion, slurred speech, and drowsiness. Hypoglycemia unawareness can be dangerous, because confusion may keep you from treating the low blood sugar appropriately. This can allow the low blood sugar to become more severe and result in serious problems like passing out or having seizures. If you think you have hypoglycemia unawareness, please do not drive and discuss this with your doctor right away. For people who have this condition and cannot treat their low glucose without help, a medicine called glucagon needs to be used. By injecting glucagon (which comes in an emergency kit), a spouse/partner/friend/coworker can help to bring the glucose level back up to a normal range when the person with diabetes is unable or unwilling to safely eat carbohydrates.