

Recognizing Low Blood Sugar by Severity

Level	Blood Sugar	Symptoms	Action
Mild	54–70 mg/dL	Shakiness, sweating, hunger, rapid heartbeat, anxiety	Treat with 15g fast carbs — see below
Moderate	40–54 mg/dL	Confusion, difficulty concentrating, slurred speech, blurred vision	Treat immediately with 15–20g fast carbs; do NOT drive
Severe (Emergency) or unconscious	< 40 mg/dL	Seizure, loss of consciousness, inability to swallow	Use glucagon device immediately; call 911

The 15-15 Rule

1. **Eat or drink 15 grams of fast-acting carbohydrates** immediately.
2. **Wait 15 minutes**, then recheck your blood sugar.
3. If still below 70 mg/dL → **repeat 15g of fast carbs**.
4. Once BG is above 70 mg/dL and your next meal is more than 1 hour away → eat a small snack with protein (e.g., crackers + peanut butter).
5. Do **NOT** treat with chocolate, ice cream, or high-fat foods — fat slows sugar absorption.

15 Grams of Fast-Acting Carbohydrates — Quick Reference

Food / Product	Amount	Notes
Glucose tablets	3–4 tablets	Most reliable — designed for this purpose
Fruit juice (apple, orange)	4 oz (half cup)	Avoid juice with pulp — slower
Regular soda (not diet)	4–5 oz (half can)	Do NOT use diet soda — no sugar
Honey or corn syrup	1 tablespoon	Easy to keep on hand
Glucose gel (GlucoGel, Insta-Glucose)	1 packet	Useful if mild difficulty swallowing
Sugar packets	3–4 packets	Mix in water
Candy (Skittles, gummy bears)	~15 pieces / 15g	Count the label grams carefully

Severe Hypoglycemia — Glucagon Emergency Devices

Baqsimi (nasal glucagon)

Nasal powder — no injection needed. Insert tip into one nostril and press plunger. May repeat in opposite nostril after 15 min. **Works even if unconscious.**

Gvoke (auto-injector or prefilled syringe)

Subcutaneous injection into thigh or upper arm. Remove cap, press against skin, click. Two doses available: 0.5 mg (children) and 1 mg (adults).

Zegalogue (dasiglucagon auto-injector)

Subcutaneous auto-injector, similar mechanism to Gvoke. Single 0.6 mg adult dose. Onset in ~10 min.

Traditional kit (Lilly or Novo kit)

Requires mixing — powder + diluent + injection. More steps but widely covered by insurance. Your caregiver needs training in advance.

After using ANY glucagon: Turn person on their side (recovery position). Call 911. They will need IV glucose at the ER.

Afrezza (inhaled insulin) users: Hypoglycemia resolves faster because Afrezza clears the body in ~2 hours. The 15-15 rule still applies. However, do not re-treat until you have waited the full 15 minutes — the short duration means blood sugar often rises quickly on its own.

Learn more at [endocrine.plus](#) — full articles, medication guides, and educational resources for all our patients.

This handout is for educational purposes only and does not replace individualized medical advice from your provider. Endocrine & Diabetes Plus Clinic of Houston • 832-968-7003 • [endocrine.plus](#) • Full article: [endocrine.plus/education/insulin-dose-tools.html](#)