

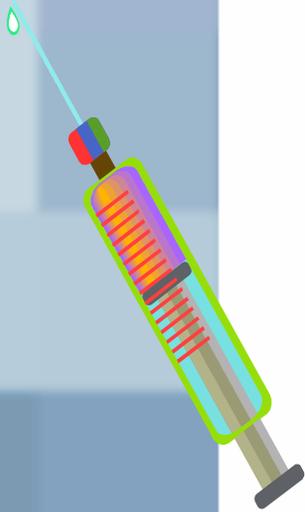
Health Point: Diabetes and Your Blood Sugar



What is diabetes?

- Diabetes is a health condition that causes sugar to build up in your blood, instead of being used by your body.
 - The body uses sugar by making a chemical called '**insulin.**'
 - Insulin controls the amount of sugar in your blood.
 - If you have diabetes, you do not have enough insulin, or the insulin is not working in the correct way.

There are two types of diabetes.



- If you have **type 1** diabetes, your body does not make any insulin.
- If you have **type 2** diabetes:
 - Your body does not produce enough insulin, or
 - Your body does produce insulin, but it does not use it correctly.

People with diabetes can have high or low blood sugar levels.



- Too much sugar can build up in your blood if you do not eat properly or take your medicine.
- Sometimes, your blood sugar levels can become too low. This mostly happens when:
 - You skip a meal
 - You take too much medicine
 - You exercise too much

If you have diabetes, it is important for you to control your blood sugar levels.

- High or low blood sugar can cause serious health problems, including:
 - Loss of consciousness
 - Unhealthy eyes (or even blindness)
 - Unhealthy feet (or even having a foot or leg removed)
 - Heart disease



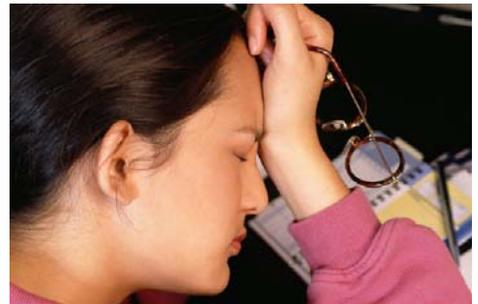
By knowing the signs of high and low blood sugar, you can protect yourself.

- Common signs of high blood sugar include:
 - Feeling thirsty or hungry all of the time
 - Feeling weak or tired
 - Having blurry vision
 - Having dry skin
 - Needing to urinate often



Signs of low blood sugar

- Common signs of low blood sugar include:
 - Having blurry vision
 - Feeling weak or tired
 - Feeling shaky or dizzy
 - Feeling upset or nervous
 - Feeling hungry
 - Sweating a lot
 - Having a headache



If you have diabetes, you can stay healthy by checking your blood sugar.



- Most people check their blood sugar levels by testing a drop of their blood on a special meter (often called a glucose meter).
- Your support staff can help you to test your blood sugar levels.
- Your doctor can tell you what your blood sugar level should normally be in different situations.

If your blood sugar level is too high, it can cause a health emergency.



- If you have taken your medications as instructed by your doctor, but your blood sugar level is still too high, you should call your doctor right away!
- The doctor may need to change your treatment to keep your blood sugar levels under control.

If your blood sugar levels are too low, you can do something about it.

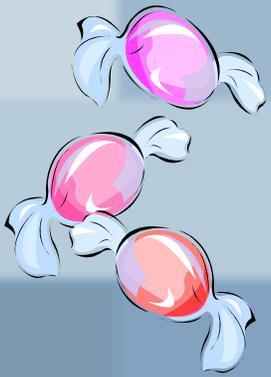
- You can eat certain foods to raise your blood sugar to the correct level.
- To raise your blood sugar, you can eat or drink **ONE** of these choices:

- Three pieces of hard candy or three glucose tablets

- A small cup of orange juice

- A little more than half a can of regular soda (not diet)

- One tablespoon of sugar



To prevent high or low blood sugar, follow your doctor's instructions and test your blood sugar often.



- By checking your blood sugar often, you can make sure it stays near your normal range.
- If you need help, ask your support provider to help you.
- By keeping your blood sugar levels under control, you can stay healthy.

Check out these resources to learn more about blood sugar and diabetes.

- Learn more about diabetes and your blood sugar at:

www.learningaboutdiabetes.com

- For a form on “Questions to Ask My Doctor about Diabetes” go to:

http://www.caldiabetes.org/content_display.cfm?CategoryID=0&ContentID=298

- For a “Diabetes Health Record Card” go to:

http://www.caldiabetes.org/content_display.cfm?contentID=19

