

# Diabetes



## The Basics

Diabetes is a disease that affects the way the body turns sugar into energy. There are several types of diabetes—the most common is Type 2 Diabetes.

## Know Your Numbers

If you have diabetes, you should try to keep your blood sugar (glucose) level as close to normal as possible. It's good to have a blood sugar level between 80 and 130 mg/dl.

There are 2 important conditions to be aware of: Hypoglycemia and Hyperglycemia.

**Hypoglycemia** is when your blood sugar is too low (less than 70 mg/dl). *Signs of this include: sweating, trembling, dizziness, hunger, headache, blurred vision, sleepiness, or irritability.*

**Hyperglycemia** is when your blood sugar is too high (over 180 mg/dl). *Signs of this include: increased thirst, frequent urination, blurred vision, fatigue, dry skin or mouth.*

## Treating Hypoglycemia (Low Blood Sugar)

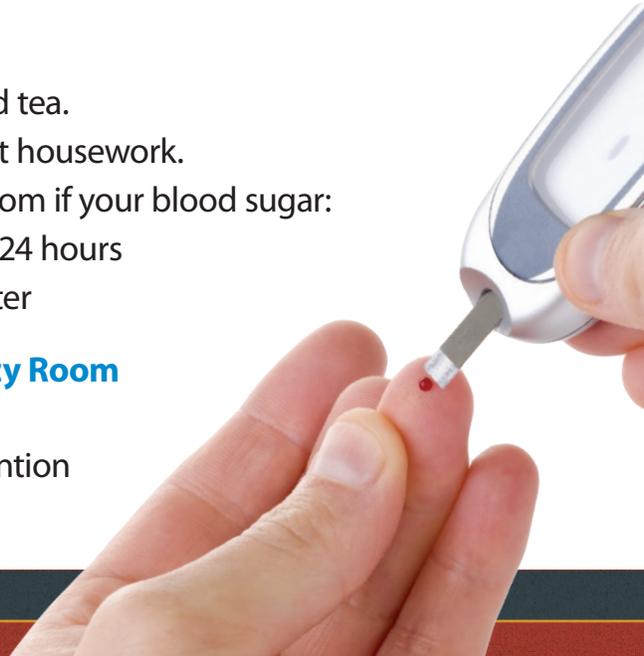
1. Eat or drink something with fast acting sugar to quickly raise your blood sugar level. *Examples include: ½ cup juice, ½ cup regular (NOT diet) soda, 1 Tablespoon honey or sugar, or 3 to 4 glucose tablets.*
2. Rest for 15 minutes and then test your blood sugar again.
3. If your blood sugar is below 70 mg/dl, then repeat the entire process. If your blood sugar is over 70 mg/dl, then eat a snack with protein, like half of a turkey sandwich, or eat your next meal so that you can keep your blood sugar at a normal level.
4. If you have more than two low blood sugars (less than 70 mg/dl) in one day, call your doctor or go to the emergency room.

## Treating Hyperglycemia (High Blood Sugar)

1. Drink a non-caloric beverage like water or unsweetened tea.
2. Participate in some light activity such as walking or light housework.
3. You should call your doctor OR go to the emergency room if your blood sugar:
  - a. Is higher than 300 mg/dl two or more times over 12-24 hours
  - b. Is higher than 500 mg/dl, "HI", or "HHH" on your meter

## Other Times to Call Your Doctor or Go to the Emergency Room

1. Vomiting or diarrhea for more than 6 hours
2. Other medical problem(s) that requires immediate attention



## Monitor Your Blood Sugar

- Check your blood sugar level each morning as soon as you wake up, before you eat *or* take your medicine. This is known as your *fasting blood sugar*.
- If you take pills for your diabetes, alternate checking your blood sugar before breakfast and two hours after your biggest meal of the day.
- If you take insulin for your diabetes, check your blood sugar three times per day. Your physician can recommend the schedule that is best for you.
- When you are sick, you will need to test your blood sugar more often.
- Check any time when you feel that your blood sugar might be too high or too low.

## Eat Right

What to do until you get a meal plan or see the dietitian:

- Do not skip meals. Eat at least three meals per day
- Eat on a regular schedule every four-to-five hours
- Eat less food
- Do not drink fruit juice, regular soda or sweet tea
- Drink calorie-free liquids such as water, coffee, unsweetened tea, or diet soda
- Limit/avoid foods that are high in sugar such as candies, cake, pie, cookies, doughnuts, sweetened cereals, honey, syrup or jelly



## Take Your Medications

In addition to eating healthy and exercising, some people with Type 2 Diabetes will need pills to help keep blood sugar levels within a good range. Other people with Type 2 diabetes may need to take insulin shots. Still others may need *both* pills and shots.

**It is important to know the names of the medications you are taking, the dosages, how the medications work, and possible side effects. In addition, it is extremely important that you take your medications exactly as prescribed by your doctor.**

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For more information or to set an appointment with an **Augusta Health Diabetes Educator**, please call **(540) 213-2537**



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## Resources

American Diabetes Association [www.diabetes.org](http://www.diabetes.org)

National Diabetes Education Program [www.ndep.org](http://www.ndep.org)