

## Diabetic emergency advice:

High blood sugar? Call 999.

Low blood sugar?

1. Sit them down.
2. Give 3 jelly babies/150ml fruit juice.
3. No improvement? Call 999

Courtesy of

**St John  
Ambulance**



## Hyperglycaemia

This is where the blood sugar level is higher than normal. It may be caused by a person with diabetes who has not had the correct dose of medication. They may have eaten too much sugary or starchy food or, they may be unwell with an infection.

### Signs and symptoms

Look for:

- warm, dry skin
- rapid pulse and breathing
- fruity, sweet breath
- excessive thirst
- drowsiness, leading them to become unresponsive if not treated (also known as a diabetic coma)
- medical warning jewellery or medication.

### What to do

If you suspect hyperglycaemia (high blood sugar), they need urgent treatment.

Call 999 or 112 for emergency help and say that you suspect hyperglycaemia.

They may be wearing a medical bracelet or medallion or have a card on them which can alert you to their condition.

While you wait for help to arrive, keep checking their breathing, pulse and whether they respond to you.

If they become unresponsive at any point, open their airway, check their breathing and prepare to start CPR.

## Hypoglycaemia

This is where the blood sugar level is lower than normal. It can be caused by an imbalance between the level of insulin and the level of glucose in the blood. Someone with diabetes may recognise the onset of a hypoglycaemic episode.

### Signs and symptoms

Look for:

- weakness, faintness or hunger
- confusion and irrational behaviour
- sweating with cold, clammy skin
- rapid pulse
- palpitations
- trembling or shaking
- deteriorating level of response
- medical warning jewellery or medication.

### **What to do**

If you suspect hypoglycaemia (low blood sugar), help the person to sit down. If they have their own glucose gel or glucose tablets, help them take it. If not, you need to give them something sugary, such as an 150ml glass of fruit juice or non-diet fizzy drink; three teaspoons of sugar or sugar lumps; or three sweets such as jelly babies.

If they improve quickly, give them more of the sugary food or drink and let them rest. If they have their blood glucose testing kit with them, help them use it to check their blood sugar level. Stay with them until they feel completely better.

If they do not improve quickly, look for any other reason why they could be unwell and call 999 or 112 for emergency help.

Keep monitoring their breathing and level of response while waiting for help to arrive.

If they are not fully alert, don't try to give them something to eat or drink as they may choke.

If they become unresponsive at any point, open their airway, check their breathing and prepare to give CPR.