



DiabetesSisters is honored to work with a wide variety of organizations, companies, institutions, health systems, government agencies, diabetes bloggers, and online communities serving people with diabetes in order to reach more women with diabetes with our messages of healthy living and positive peer support.

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## No Woman Should Walk Alone in Her Diabetes Journey

More than 15 million women in the U.S. and 181 million women worldwide are currently living with diabetes. They quietly face unique challenges every day such as fluctuating blood sugars due to pregnancy, menses, and menopause. For reasons not fully understood, women with diabetes also face increased health risks with heart disease, depression, eating disorders, osteoporosis, and ketoacidosis. And they also report higher levels of loneliness and isolation.



### Our Mission

To improve the health and quality of life of women with, and at risk for, diabetes and to advocate on their behalf.

### Our Vision

A world where women are fully empowered to effectively manage their diabetes.



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## HYPOGLYCEMIA



**WOMEN  
DIABETES  
LIFE**

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## What Is Diabetes?

Diabetes is a condition characterized by the body's inability to properly use blood glucose (BG, also known as blood sugar) or produce insulin, resulting in high blood sugar (hyperglycemia).

**Type 1 diabetes:** The pancreas no longer makes insulin, so BG cannot enter the cells to be used for energy. Individuals with type 1 diabetes require insulin to survive. The cause of type 1 diabetes is unknown, but the occurrence is greater if a parent or sibling also has type 1 diabetes.

**Type 2 diabetes:** Either the pancreas does not make enough insulin, or the body is unable to use insulin correctly. People with type 2 diabetes may use a variety of treatments including medication, diet, and exercise. The causes of type 2 diabetes include various factors such as family history, age, physical inactivity, excess weight, gestational diabetes, and race/ethnicity.

## What Is Hypoglycemia?

Hypoglycemia, also known as low blood sugar, is when blood sugar decreases to below-normal levels. In people with diabetes, hypoglycemia is diagnosed when blood sugar is lower than 70 mg/dL. Severe hypoglycemia is when blood sugar drops below 55 mg/dL and may require another person's help.

## Who Is at Risk for Hypoglycemia?

People with diabetes are at risk of experiencing hypoglycemia. Medications that help lower blood sugar, such as insulin and some oral medications, can contribute to the onset of low blood sugar.

## Symptoms of Hypoglycemia Include, But Are Not Limited to:

- Hunger
- Trembling
- Sweating
- Pale skin
- Irritability
- Drowsiness
- Accelerated heart rate
- Dizziness
- Weakness
- Uncoordinated, clumsy movements
- Concentration problems/confusion



## How Do You Treat Hypoglycemia?

Immediate treatment includes consumption of 15 grams of rapid-acting carbohydrates such as glucose tablets, honey, hard candies, or fruit juice. The general rule is when blood sugar level drops below 70 mg/dL, treat with 15 grams of carbohydrates, wait 15 minutes, then check blood sugar again. This is commonly known as the "15/15 rule." If the blood sugar is still low, this procedure should be repeated.

In the case of severe hypoglycemia (blood sugar lower than 55 mg/dL), people with diabetes may require glucagon, a hormone that works with your body's natural process to increase blood sugar levels. Because it is injected into the bloodstream, it works quickly to increase blood sugar. Following any severe hypoglycemic event, it is important to follow up with your healthcare team and discuss next steps, ask questions, and adjust treatment methods.

## If You Have Diabetes:

- Carry some type of fast-acting carbs with you. Keep a supply of fast-acting carbs on hand where you work, go to school, travel, or spend significant amounts of time.
- Carry glucagon with you in case of a severe hypoglycemic event.
- Talk with people who spend time near you at work, school, and/or home about the signs and symptoms of low and severely low blood sugar. Share the location of your "low" supplies with them. Show them how to use glucagon in case of a severe low blood sugar.
- Wear medical ID jewelry that says "diabetes" and the diabetes medications you take, such as insulin.

## If You Spend Time Around Someone Who Has Diabetes:

- Remember that people with diabetes can experience low or severely low blood sugar at any time.
- Ask them if they keep a supply of fast-acting carbs and glucagon to use for lows and where it is located.
- Notice if they start to display any of the signs or symptoms listed above.
- Assist them in checking their blood sugar if possible, and help them drink or eat something sugary.
- If they cannot drink or eat, or they pass out, give glucagon and call 911 immediately.
- Do not try to make someone who is unconscious eat or drink.

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