

Diabetes and Driving

When you take insulin or some types of pills for diabetes, you are at risk of having a **low blood sugar while driving**. These medications lower your blood sugar quickly.

If you have a low blood sugar while driving, you are a danger to yourself and others. A low blood sugar is also called hypoglycemia.



Your blood sugar should be **over 5.0 mmol/L to drive**.

Remember “Over 5 to Drive”.

If you drive a commercial vehicle, there are different guidelines for your blood sugar level. Please discuss with your health care provider and ask for a copy of “Diabetes and Commercial Driving”.

What do I need to do before I drive?

Always test your blood sugar just before driving.

- If your blood sugar is **over 5.0 mmol/L**, you can drive. Test your blood sugar after every 4 hours of driving.
 - If your blood sugar is **4.0 to 5.0 mmol/L**, eat a snack with carbohydrate, such as cheese and crackers or ½ sandwich to raise your blood sugar over 5.0 mmol/L.
 - If your blood sugar is **less than 4.0 mmol/L** or you have one or more of the symptoms of a low blood sugar, you need to raise your blood sugar quickly by doing **Steps 1 and 2** on the next page.
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How do I treat low blood sugar?

Step 1

Stop what you are doing.

Eat or drink 15 grams of fast-acting carbohydrate.

Choose one of these:

- 3 to 6 glucose tablets (depending on brand)
- 3 teaspoons, cubes or packets of table sugar (may be dissolved in water)
- 3 teaspoons of honey
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup regular pop (not sugar free or diet)
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup fruit juice
- 3 to 6 candies (depending on brand)

Step 2

Wait 15 minutes. Do not drive. Check your blood sugar again:

- If your blood sugar is still **5.0 mmol/L or less** or your symptoms have not gone away, repeat Step 1.
- If your blood sugar is **over 5.0 mmol/L**, have a snack such as a granola bar, cheese and crackers or $\frac{1}{2}$ sandwich to keep your blood sugar above 5.0 mmol/L.



When you treat a low blood sugar, always wait 45 to 60 minutes before you drive.

You need this time to fully recover and be able to drive safely.

What causes a low blood sugar?

Low blood sugar can be caused by:

- not eating at regular times or missing meals or snacks
- eating less carbohydrate than usual
- doing more exercise or activity than usual
- taking more diabetes medication or insulin than you need
- drinking alcohol

What happens when your blood sugar is low?

You may have one or more of these symptoms:

- headache
- blurry eyesight
- hunger
- irritability
- sweating
- dizziness
- fast heartbeat
- shaking
- anxiety
- weakness, feeling tired

What do I do if I feel a low blood sugar while I am driving?

If you feel that your blood sugar is low:

- pull to the side of the road and stop driving
- remove your keys from the ignition
- test your blood sugar
- treat a low blood sugar by doing Step 1 and Step 2 on page 2
- wait 45 to 60 minutes before driving



Drive safely

Always wear your medical alert identification.

Keep an “emergency kit” in your vehicle to prevent or treat low blood sugars. This kit should contain:

- glucose tablets
- drinks with sugar such as juice or regular pop
- granola bars
- 2 or 3 plain cookies



Always travel with your blood glucose monitor and testing supplies.

Do not keep your monitor and supplies in the vehicle as they can be affected by hot or cold temperatures.

When is it unsafe to drive?

A person who is likely to have a low blood sugar (hypoglycemia) may not be fit to drive. You may need to test your blood sugar more often if you:

- were recently diagnosed with diabetes and are learning how to use insulin
- are unable to recognize early signs of hypoglycemia
- are not testing your blood sugar regularly or keeping your blood sugar well controlled
- have moderate hypoglycemia (needing others' help) or severe hypoglycemia (needing emergency medical care)



By law, doctors must report anyone they consider to be unfit to drive.

It is important to follow up with your health care provider to review your blood sugar patterns.

1 teaspoon = 5 mL, 1 tablespoon = 15 mL, ½ cup = 125 mL,
¾ cup = 175 mL, 1 cup = 250 mL, 1 oz = 30 grams