**High and Low Blood Sugar**

**What You Should Know About High Blood Sugar**

**Hyperglycermia** is the medical word for high blood sugar. High blood sugar can occur either slowly or quickly. When blood sugar goes up and stays high, it means that diabetes is out of control.

**High Blood Sugar Symptoms**

* increased thirst
* increased hunger
* frequent need to urinate
* dry itchy skin
* tired or sleepy feeling
* blurry vision
* feeling a sick stomach
* breathing problems

**High blood sugar can happen for many reasons:**

* not taking medicine as prescribed
* expired insulin (insulin that is too old or was not stored properly)
* getting sick or having other kinds of stress (physical or emotional)
* eating too much (especially carbohydrates)
* not getting normal activity or exercise
* taking steroids or other medicines which can affect blood sugar

**What To Do**

Check blood sugar anytime you think it may be too high.

If the blood sugar is higher than normal, follow the PCP’s orders and

* give usual medicines at the usual times
* have the resident move more
* have resident drink several glasses of water or sugar-free liquids (without caffeine)
* provide regularly planned meals
* check and record the resident’s blood sugar every four hours until it is back to normal

If the resident has type 1 diabetes, also check the urine for ketones every four hours and record the results until back to normal if you have PCP orders to do so.

**You should call the health care provider for the following symptoms:**

* vomiting, confused, sleepy, short of breath or feel dehydrated
* blood sugars above the parameters on the PCP orders
* urine shows moderate or large amounts of ketones (if you have orders for testing)

**What You Should Know About Low Blood Sugar**

**Hypoglycemia** is the medical word for low blood sugar. When the amount of sugar in your blood becomes too low, your body cannot work the way it should. Most people with diabetes don’t feel well if their blood sugar drops below 70 mg/dl.

Low blood sugar occurs most often in people who are taking certain pills or insulin for their diabetes. If the resident is managing blood sugar through diet and exercise, it is unlikely that the resident will develop low blood sugar.

**Low Blood Sugar Symptoms**

* shaky or weak
* sweaty
* clumsy
* a fast heart beat (palpitations)
* hungry
* a headache
* lightheaded
* nervous
* confused
* tired
* angry
* tingly around the mouth

There may be other symptoms or feelings besides those listed above. Some pills may hide symptoms of low blood sugar. Ask the health care provider if the resident is taking one of those medicines. Talk with your health care provider about how to prevent low blood sugar.

**Some causes of low blood sugar are:**

* skipping or not finishing meals or snacks
* taking too much medication/insulin
* eating meals or snacks at different times
* taking medication at different times
* getting more exercise than usual
* drinking alcohol

**What To Do**

If you think the blood sugar is too low, CHECK THE RESIDENT’S BLOOD SUGAR RIGHT AWAY.

If your blood sugar is low (less than 70) eat or drink a quick-acting source of carbohydrate:

* \*two - four glucose tablets
* \*tube of glucose gel
* 1/2 cup of fruit juice
* 1/2 cup regular soda
* one cup of skim milk
* small box of raisins
* six - seven hard candies

\*Taking glucose is the preferred treatment for hypoglycemia.

Follow the PCP’s orders. A standard approach is checking the resident’s blood sugar again in 15 minutes. If the blood sugar is still too low (less than 70) provide a quick-acting source of glucose again and recheck the blood sugar in 15 minutes.

**Call the medical provider or 9-1-1 if:**

* Per PCP’s orders
* The resident still does not feel well and aren’t sure what to do.
* The resident begins to feel worse at any time.

Some people have a prescription for glucagon, an emergency injection given to people with very low blood sugar. Ask the medical provider if this should be ordered.

After successfully treating a low blood sugar, if the next meal is more than one hour away, provide one of the following:

* a glass of milk
* cheese with some crackers
* half a sandwich