

Dealing with diabetes: day to day

Levels: 2 and 3

Subject: How much glucose is right?

TEACHER

STUDENTS



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Doctors consider a person's blood-glucose level to be 'normal' when the device that measures the level of glucose in a person's blood, the glucometer, reads between 65 and 140. If the reading is over 140, the person is said to be suffering from **Hyperglycemia**.

If you look at the word, you'll see it's made up of two smaller words: "**HYPER**" and "**GLYCEMIA**":

HYPER means 'unusually large'. You've seen it in words like **HYPER**market, meaning 'an unusually large supermarket'.

GLYCEMIA is a word that refers to 'the concentration, or level, of **GLUCOSE** in the blood'.

That's why **Hyperglycemia** translates as "unusually **HIGH** blood-glucose level".

However, if the glucometer gives a glucose reading under 65, we call that **Hypoglycemia**. This, too, is made up of two words:

HYP, which means 'unusually low', and

GLYCEMIA, which means 'concentration or level of **GLUCOSE** in the blood'.

Hypoglycemia, therefore, translates as "unusually **LOW** blood-glucose level".

Hypoglycemia

When a person has hypoglycemia - not enough glucose in the blood - they don't feel too well. They may feel dizzy; they might sweat a lot and feel too weak to move about; sometimes, they get irritable, for no apparent reason; and, many get quite hungry.

These are all signs that it's time, for them, to check whether their glucose levels are running low. If they are low, all they have to do is eat or drink something that has sugar in it, so their glucose levels will return to normal. For example, they could have a couple of sugar cubes, a fruit juice or a cola drink.

So, don't be too surprised if you see a school friend, whom you know has diabetes, drinking fruit juice at an unusual time of day.

They'll probably take a few minutes to recover and, then, they'll be fine and can carry on with what they were doing; all thanks to that juice, which will have replenished the supply of glucose their body so badly needed.

Ask a friend, with diabetes, to tell you what it feels like when he or she has **hypoglycemia**.