



Drive Safely with Diabetes

If you have diabetes mellitus (high blood sugar) and are taking insulin or an oral hypoglycemic medicine*, you may be at risk for having low blood sugar (**hypoglycemia**). Symptoms of hypoglycemia (defined as a blood sugar below the normal range **below 70 mg%**), may include:

- sweating
- shakiness
- anxiety
- heart palpitations
- weakness
- confusion (sometimes).



These symptoms usually do not appear until your blood sugar drops below 45 mg%. Low blood sugar can affect your judgment and ability to drive**. The tips below should help prevent low blood sugar while you are driving.

Keep your blood sugar level as stable as possible.

Plan your trip carefully. Try to eat the same kinds and amounts of food that you normally would at home. Try not to change the time you eat. Try not to miss a meal or snack.



How much time do you need before you get there?

Plan your trip carefully. How far will you drive? What will the traffic conditions be during the time you are on the road? Make sure your blood sugar level will be in a safe range until your arrival. During a long trip, you want to be certain your blood sugar is stable and above 100 mg%.

* An oral hypoglycemic agent, such as glyburide (Micronase®; Glynase®; DiaBeta®); glipizide (Glucotrol®); glimepiride (Amaryl®); repaglinide (Prandin®); nateglinide (Starlix®); metformin (Glucophage®); pioglitazone (Actos®), and rosiglitazone (Avandia®). Combination products, such as glyburide/metformin (Glucovance®) and glipizide/metformin (Metaglip®) are also hypoglycemic agents.

**Please note: doctors are required by law to report patients to the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) when those patients have medical conditions which may impair their driving. Keeping your blood sugar within normal levels will help to keep yourself, your passengers, and others who share the road with you safe.

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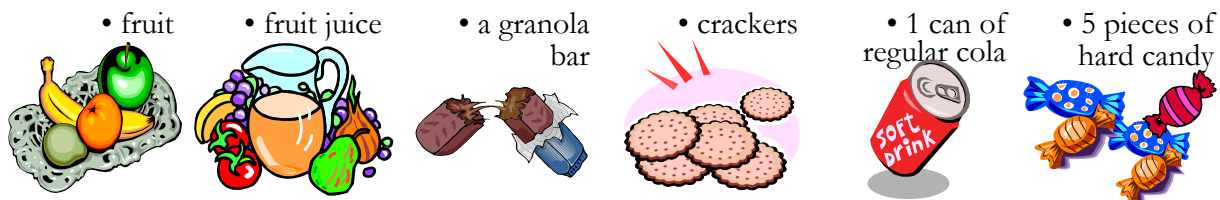
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Keep the supplies you need with you.

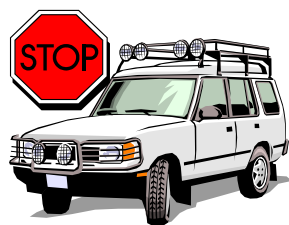
Store the listed items in your car.

- (1) Tool to check blood glucose (e.g., accucheck).
- (2) Ready-to-eat snack(s) that are high in carbohydrate. Make sure you do not over-eat them.
For example:



Check your blood sugar before you start that engine.

If your blood sugar is below 100 mg%, eat a carbohydrate-rich food. Recheck your blood sugar in 20-30 minutes. Make sure it is above 100 mg% before you start the engine.



Pull off the road at the first sign of low blood sugar.

If you start to have signs of low blood sugar, pull off the road and check your blood sugar. If your blood sugar is below 100 mg%, eat a ready-to-eat snack. Wait 20-30 minutes and recheck your blood sugar. Make sure that your blood sugar is in the safe range before you start driving again.

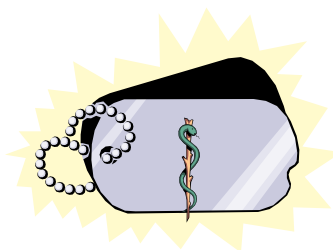
Rapid drop of blood sugar? Discuss it with your physician!

Although low blood sugar is defined as **less than 70 mg%**, some patients with chronic diabetes may have symptoms of low blood sugar when it is **below 100 mg%**. You may want to check your blood sugar often. Some people with diabetes may have rapid drop in the blood sugar. If you have this problem, discuss with your physician how often you should check your blood sugar for safe driving.



Wear a medical alert bracelet or neck charm (not wallet card) stating you have diabetes mellitus.

If you develop low blood sugar while driving, you do not want to be mistaken for a drunk driver. The fact that you have diabetes mellitus and are taking diabetic medications should be known right away. An alert bracelet or a neck charm can communicate that fact quickly.



Disclaimer: This information is for health educational purposes only. If you have questions, you should ask your doctor, nurse, or other persons who you see for your health care needs. Each clinician caring for the patient is responsible for determining the most appropriate care.

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