
Emergency: Diabetic Ketoacidosis (DKA)

People with type 1 diabetes are at risk for DKA if they do not take enough insulin, have a severe infection or other illness, or become severely dehydrated. People in DKA often have high blood sugar, although it is possible to have normal blood sugar levels and still develop DKA.

High blood sugar	Symptoms of DKA	Severe DKA
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Dry mouth• Thirst• Weakness/tiredness• Headache• Blurred vision• Frequent urination	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Flushed, hot, dry skin• A strong, fruity breath odour• Restlessness, drowsiness, or difficulty waking up• Rapid, deep breathing• Loss of appetite, abdominal pain, and vomiting• Confusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Difficulty breathing• Brain swelling (cerebral edema)• Coma• Death

What to Do

Go to the ER. Treatment involves giving insulin and fluids through a vein AND closely monitoring and replacing electrolytes.

Emergency: Low Blood Sugar (Hypoglycemia)

People with type 1 diabetes are most likely to have low blood sugar if they take too much insulin (or take it too soon) or do more physical activity than usual.

Low blood sugar	As blood sugar drops further	Severe low blood sugar
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sweating• Pale skin• Nervousness, shakiness, and weakness• Extreme hunger and slight nausea• Dizziness and headache• Blurred vision• Fast or irregular heartbeat and feeling anxious• Irritability	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Inability to concentrate• Confusion• Personality changes, such as anger or crying• Slurred speech• Unsteadiness when standing or walking• Muscle twitching• Vision loss	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Seizure• Loss of consciousness (coma)• Stroke• Death

What to Do

Give sugar: Juice, Regular cola, Glucose gel, Glucose tablets, Skittles, Starbursts, etc.

Call 911

- If the person cannot treat themselves (e.g., unconscious or is having a seizure), or
- if you are worried about their or your own safety (e.g., the person is reacting violently)