

High Blood Sugar

What is high blood sugar?

Nondiabetic hyperglycemia means your blood glucose (sugar) level is high even though you do not have diabetes. Hyperglycemia may happen suddenly during a major illness or injury. Or, hyperglycemia may happen over a longer period of time and be caused by a chronic disease (diabetes type I or II).

Why treat hyperglycemia?

If not resolved, hyperglycemia can increase your risk for infections, prevent healing, and it make it hard to manage your condition. It is important to treat hyperglycemia to prevent these problems. Hyperglycemia that is not treated can damage your nerves, blood vessels, tissues, and organs. Damage to arteries may increase your risk for heart attack and stroke. Nerve damage may also lead to other heart, stomach, and nerve problems.

What are they symptoms of hyperglycemia?

You may not have any signs or symptoms, or you may have any of the following:

Increased thirst

Frequent urination

Blurred vision

Nausea and vomiting

Weight loss without trying

Fruity-smelling breath

Should I check my blood sugar?

Your healthcare provider will tell you if you need to check your blood sugar level at home. He or she will also tell you how often to check it. Ask your healthcare provider what your blood sugar level should be. Write down your results and show them to your healthcare provider. Your provider may use the results to make changes to your medicine, food, and exercise plan.

How will I know if I am diabetic?

There are other blood sugar tests you may need to take to be diagnosed as diabetic. These tests are “Hemoglobin A1c” (measures your average blood sugar level over 3 months), “fasting blood sugar” (measures blood sugar 8 hours from last meal), or “glucose tolerance test” (measures blood sugar at certain times after you drink a glucose drink). Your healthcare provider will use the results of these tests to diagnose you as diabetic or not, or to figure out what kind of treatment you may need. You may be referred to a diabetes specialist (endocrinologist) for additional follow-up care.

What is the treatment for hyperglycemia?

Your provider may recommend the following:

- **Hypoglycemic medicine** helps to decrease the amount of sugar in your blood. This medicine helps your body move the sugar to your cells, where it is needed for energy. Your healthcare provider will tell you how often to take this medicine and how long to take it.
- **Insulin** helps to decrease blood sugar levels. You may need 1 or more shots of insulin each day. You or a family member will be taught how to give the insulin shots. Your healthcare provider will tell you how often you need to inject insulin each day. He or she will also tell you how long you will need to take it.
- **Change your diet.** Sometimes high blood sugar is managed on healthy diet alone, without the help of medications. You may need to lower the amount of carbohydrates (sugars) you eat or drink. Your provider can help you to create a diet that improves your blood sugar level.

How can I prevent hyperglycemia?

- **Exercise** can help lower your blood sugar when it is high. It also can keep your blood sugar levels steady over time. Exercise for at least 30 minutes, 5 days a week. Work with your healthcare provider to create an exercise plan. Children should get at least 60 minutes of physical activity each day.
- **Maintain a healthy weight.** Ask your healthcare provider how much you should weigh. A healthy weight can help you lower your blood sugar levels. Ask your provider to help you create a weight loss plan if you are overweight. Together you can set manageable weight loss goals.
- **Follow your meal plan.** Your provider can help you make a meal plan to help lower your blood sugar level. You may need to decrease the amount of carbohydrates that you eat.
- **Do not smoke.** Nicotine and other chemicals in cigarettes and cigars can cause lung damage. They can also make your blood sugar levels harder to control. Ask your healthcare provider for information if you currently smoke and need help to quit. E-cigarettes or smokeless tobacco still contain nicotine. Talk to your healthcare provider before you use these products.
- **Limit or do not drink alcohol.** Alcohol can increase your blood sugar level. A drink of alcohol is 12 ounces of beer, 5 ounces of wine, or 1½ ounces of liquor. Ask your healthcare provider if it is safe for you to drink alcohol. Also ask how much is safe for you to drink each day.