Hypoglycemia “15-15”- Rule

Blood glucose (sugar) of less than 70 is considered too low!

Some symptoms of low blood glucose you can expect are:

Mild
Shakiness
Sweating
Fast heart beat
Hunger
Blurred vision
Difficulty thinking
Anxiety
Headache
Tiredness

Moderate
Difficulty Moving
Confusion
Unusual Behavior
Irritable

Severe
Seizure
Combative
Coma

Causes of Low Blood Glucose

- Taking too much insulin or diabetes medication.
- Taking insulin or medication and not eating enough carbohydrate at your meal or snack.
- Missing a meal or snack, or eating less than usual.
- More physical activity or exercise than usual.
- Drinking alcohol on an empty stomach.

www.nutrition.va.gov 06/2018
How to Treat a Low Blood Glucose:

- Always keep a source of **15 grams of carbohydrate** within reach. It is important to have something with you. Keep something in your pocket, your car and at your bedside.

- **Sources of 15 grams of carbohydrate:**
  - 4 glucose tablets
  - 3 pieces of hard candy
  - 4 ounces (1/2 cup) fruit juice
  - 1 tube of glucose gel
  - 8 ounces (1 cup) milk
  - 6 ounces of regular soda (1/2 can)

- If your blood sugar is between 50-70, take **15 grams of carbohydrate**; if your blood sugar is below 50 take **30 grams of carbohydrate**.
- **Wait 15 minutes** then recheck your blood sugar. If it is still below 70, take another 15 grams of carbohydrate.
- Wait another 15 minutes then recheck your blood sugar again.
- Once your blood sugar is above 70, be sure to eat a meal or snack within an hour to keep from dropping again.
Remember:

- Wear a medical ID bracelet or necklace (ask your diabetes educator).
- Never take insulin or diabetes pills without eating.
- Never take your insulin or diabetes pills at home and then drive to a restaurant. Instead, bring diabetes medication to the restaurant to take when your food is served.
- Always carry a quick source of carbohydrate (sugar) with you.
- Check your blood glucose before driving, especially if you do not feel symptoms of low glucose. Never drive when your blood sugar is low.
- Call your doctor or the Telephone Triage Line if you have frequent unexplained low blood sugar readings (two or more a week).
- If you are unable to swallow a quick source of sugar, call 911.