

Diabetes: How to Give Glucagon

People with diabetes sometimes get very low blood glucose (sugar). If they are unconscious, they need glucagon right away.

Glucagon is a hormone that raises blood glucose quickly. It can be given as a shot or as a powder that's sprayed into the nose.

If someone close to you has diabetes, you may need to give them the glucagon shot or nose spray during a low blood glucose emergency.

Learn the steps for how to give glucagon either as a shot or a nose spray. Keep the instructions with the medicine. Review the steps often, and check the expiration date on the glucagon medicine.

Health Tools help you make wise health decisions or take action to improve your health. Actionsets are designed to help people take an active role in managing a health condition.

- [Diabetes: Dealing With Low Blood Sugar From Insulin or Medicine](#)

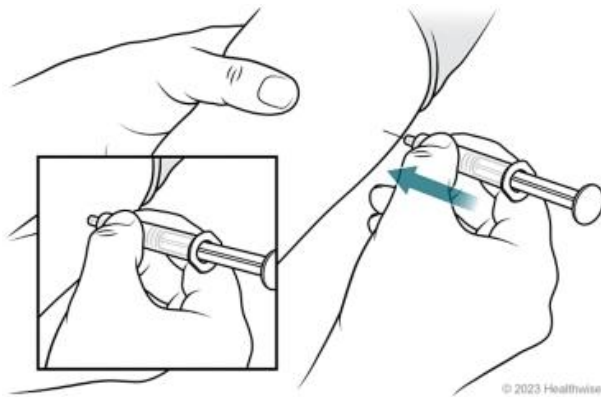
A glucagon kit has a syringe that contains liquid. The kit also has a bottle that contains the medicine, which is a powder.

Follow the instructions in the kit to mix the powder and the liquid. Put this mixture back into the syringe. Follow the directions on the package for how much medicine to give.



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Choose the injection site. Choose a clean area on the buttock, upper arm, or thigh where you will give the injection (shot).



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Insert the needle. Keeping your fingers off the plunger, hold the syringe like a pencil close to the site. Then insert the needle.



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Give the injection. Push the plunger of the syringe all the way in so the medicine goes in the body. Remove the needle from the skin slowly. Use the same angle you used to put it in.



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Turn the person on their side after giving the shot. This can keep them from choking if they vomit.



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Call for emergency help. After you give the glucagon shot, **call 911 or other emergency services.** If help has not arrived within 15 minutes and the person is still unconscious, give another glucagon shot.



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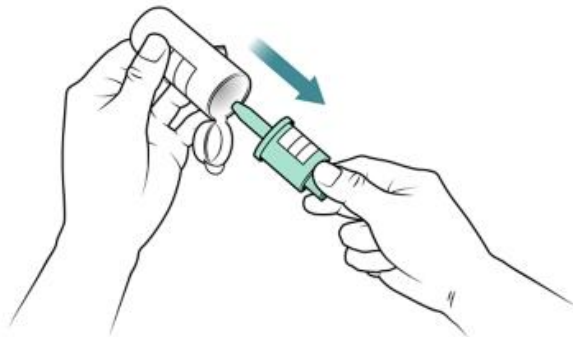
Give glucose tablets or quick-sugar food. Give some glucose tablets or quick-sugar food such as hard candy or juice when the person is alert and able to swallow. Also give them some long-acting source of carbohydrate such as crackers and cheese. Stay with the person until emergency help arrives.

Anytime a person who has diabetes gets glucagon, they should talk to a doctor to try to find out what caused the low blood glucose.

Glucagon nasal spray is absorbed through the membranes in the nose. It doesn't have to be inhaled. It will work even if the person getting the medicine has a cold. Follow the directions with the device.



1. Pull on the red tab, and remove the shrink wrap from the bottle.



2. Remove the nasal spray device from the bottle. Don't push the plunger until you're ready to give the medicine.



3. Hold the nasal spray device between your thumb and first two fingers.



4. Put the tip of the device into one nostril until your fingers touch the person's nose.



5. Push the plunger firmly until it stops. This completes the dose.



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6. Turn the person on their side in case of vomiting.



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7. Call **911**.

When the person is alert and able to swallow, give a quick-sugar food like juice or jam. Glucose tablets will also work.

If the person isn't alert in 15 minutes and you have another spray device, you can give a second dose. (Each device contains one dose.) The person's blood glucose should be checked for several hours after glucagon is given.