

DIABETIC EMERGENCY



Managing a diabetic emergency

Signs and symptoms

Low blood sugar

- pale
- hungry
- sweating
- weak
- confused
- aggressive

High blood sugar

- thirsty
- needs to urinate
- hot dry skin
- smell of acetone on breath

Management

▼ Unconscious patient.

- Follow DRSABCD.
- Give nothing by mouth

▼ Conscious patient.

If you are not sure which form of diabetic emergency the patient has, give a sweet drink—this will not give undue harm.

Low blood sugar

1. Give sugar, glucose or a sweet drink.

E.g. soft drink or cordial (NOT 'diet' or sugarfree drinks).

2. Continue giving sugar every 15 minutes.

- Until the patient recovers.
- Follow up with a sandwich or other food.

3. If no improvement, call triple zero (000) for an ambulance.

High blood sugar

1. Seek medical aid if required.

2. Give patient sugar-free fluids if help is delayed.

In an emergency, call triple zero (000) for an ambulance

For more information on St John first aid training and kits, visit www.stjohn.org.au or freecall 1300 360 455

© St John Ambulance Australia, 2011. This information may not be copied or reproduced without prior written permission. This information is NOT a substitute for first aid training. St John recommends that everyone is trained in first aid.