

## FIRST AID FACT SHEET

# Diabetes Induced Emergency

Diabetes is a condition where the body cannot maintain healthy levels of glucose, resulting in too much glucose in the blood. Glucose is a form of sugar which is the main source of energy for our bodies. Diabetic emergencies are when blood sugar levels become either too high or too low.

### Caused by

- + **Low blood sugar (Hypoglycaemia)** – lack of glucose in the blood.
- + **High blood sugar (Hyperglycaemia)** – excess of glucose in the blood.

### Signs & symptoms

#### Low blood sugar

- + Hungry.
- + Pale, sweaty.
- + Weak or shaky.
- + May appear confused, irritable or aggressive.

#### High blood sugar

- + Excessive thirst.
- + Hot, dry skin.
- + Feeling tired, blurred vision.
- + Smell of acetone on the breath.

### What to do

1. Follow DRSABCD St John Action Plan.

#### Unconscious casualty

2. Place the casualty into the recovery position.
3. Give nothing by mouth.
4. Call **Triple Zero (000)** for an ambulance.

#### Conscious casualty

##### Low blood sugar (hypoglycaemia)

1. Help casualty into a comfortable position and reassure them.
2. Give sugar such as glucose tablets, jellybeans or a sweet drink (such as a soft drink or cordial).  
**DO NOT** give diet soft drinks or sugar free cordials.
3. Continue giving sugar every 15 minutes until the casualty recovers.
4. Follow up with a sandwich or other food.
5. If there is no improvement call **Triple Zero (000)** for an ambulance.

##### High blood sugar (hyperglycaemia)

1. Follow DRSABCD St John Action Plan.
2. Call **Triple Zero (000)** for an ambulance.
3. If help delayed give sips of water only.



In a medical emergency  
call **Triple Zero (000)**

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Information provided is as per Australian Resuscitation Council Guidelines. These first aid protocols are for the Australian market only. All care has been taken in preparing this information but St John takes no responsibility for its use. This information is not a substitute for practical first aid training with St John.