

# 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:

such as a 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](http://www.stjohn.org.au) or freecall 1300 360 455**

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