

# Using Glucagon for a Low Blood Sugar Emergency

## What is glucagon?

**Glucagon** is a hormone that helps raise your blood sugar levels. It works by causing your liver to release stored glucose (sugar) into your bloodstream. It's typically used in emergency situations to treat severe low blood sugar when someone with diabetes is unable to eat or drink sugar by mouth.

## When should I use glucagon?

You should use glucagon for yourself or another person if:



- You or a person with diabetes is unresponsive or unconscious (passed out) because of low blood sugar
- You or a person with diabetes is unable to eat, drink, or swallow because of severe low blood sugar
- You or a person with diabetes has a seizure because of extremely low blood sugar

## What are the different types of glucagon kits?

### Glucagon emergency kit (commonly called the "red kit")

- This is the traditional, injectable glucagon kit, commonly called the "red kit."
- This kit includes a vial (small bottle) containing powdered glucagon and a syringe filled with sterile water. You will need to mix the glucagon powder and water before giving yourself the shot.



<p><b>Glucagon auto-injector (Gvoke HypoPen®):</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This is a device that gives you an automatic shot of glucagon (similar to how an EpiPen works). It's pre-filled, so you don't need to mix powdered glucagon with water.</li> </ul>	 <p>The image shows the packaging for Gvoke HypoPen, which includes a box and a pre-filled auto-injector. The box is labeled 'Gvoke HypoPen (glucagon injection) 1 mg per 0.2 mL' and 'FOR LOW BLOOD SUGAR EMERGENCY'. It also mentions 'Contains 2 single-dose auto-injectors' and 'For Subcutaneous Use Only'. The auto-injector is white with a red cap and a blue label.</p>
<p><b>Glucagon nasal spray (Baqsimi®)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This is a newer, needle-free option that delivers glucagon through the nose. This type of kit may be easier to use, especially for people uncomfortable with injections.</li> </ul>	 <p>The image shows the packaging for Baqsimi, which includes a yellow cap and a white nasal spray device. The device is labeled 'Baqsimi' and 'glucagon nasal spray'.</p>

### How to use the glucagon emergency kit (red kit):

- Stay calm and get the person in a safe position.
  - Place the person on their side. Glucagon may cause some people to vomit, so being on their side can help to prevent choking.
- Prepare to mix the glucagon.
  - Open the red kit to take out the syringe and vial of glucagon powder.
  - Remove the plastic cap from the vial.
- Mix the glucagon.
  - Take the syringe and inject all the sterile water from the syringe into the vial containing the glucagon powder.
  - Gently swirl the vial until the glucagon powder is fully dissolved. Do not shake.
- Prepare the injection.
  - Insert the syringe back into the vial. Draw up the entire contents of the vial by pulling back on the plunger.
  - Make sure there are no air bubbles in the syringe.
- Give the injection.

- Inject the glucagon mix into the person's upper arm, thigh, or butt.
  - After injection, safely dispose of the syringe in a sharps container.
6. Call for emergency help.
- After giving the glucagon injection, call 911 or emergency services immediately. You will want to get the patient to a doctor or to hospital emergency care as soon as possible, because being unconscious too long can be harmful.
  - Once the person is conscious or responsive again, give them a fast-acting source of sugar, such as juice or glucose tablets.

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