

Mood and Low Blood Sugar



When you see someone in distress, do you offer a snack and beverage? Low blood sugar can look like crying, anger, anxiety, confusion and falls. Frail older adults are more likely to have *low* blood sugar as appetite and nutrient absorption decline, and diabetic medications stay in the body longer.

Canadian Practice Guidelines for frailty recommend [blood sugars of 6-9 before meals and less than 14 after](#).

To maintain healthy blood sugar levels, involve your interdisciplinary team:

- Offer a snack and hydration mid-morning/late afternoon (e.g., with medication passes).
- Ask the pharmacist or prescriber to review and adjust diabetic medications.
- Consult a dietician about increasing dietary protein and fats.
- Assess for pain, mood distress, and medications, which could interfere with meal enjoyment.

To minimize painful and unnecessary blood sugar tests, always hydrate first to avoid false highs. Avoid bruised or sensitive areas (e.g., the very tip of the finger). Ask your medical practitioner to stop or reduce testing frequency if blood sugars are stable.

Looking for more resources?

- Canadian Family Physician: [Diabetes in the Frail Elderly](#)
- Antihyperglycemic [deprescribing algorithm](#) and [patient handouts](#)
- [Medicine check-ups for older adults: Diabetes medicines](#)