

Glucometry (Blood glucose measurement)

Criteria

Any time an EMS provider encounters a patient with an altered level of consciousness, confusion, or neurologic complaint, or any time there is a concern for a possible diabetic emergency. This includes patients with:

- Suspected diabetes-related emergency
- Unconsciousness
- Neurologic symptoms including signs or symptoms of a stroke
- Seizures
- Suspicion of drug or alcohol intoxication or overdose

Use and Application

Perform the glucometry testing procedure as outlined in the instructions for your specific device. All readings should be recorded on the incident response form.

**Perform glucose evaluation after the ABC's and initial assessment have been completed.
Under no circumstances should glucometry measurement detract from basic care**

If the measured glucose is <80 mg/dL, manage per the Diabetic Emergency Protocol. If a patient is treated for a low blood glucose second follow up glucose measurement must be taken and recorded. If the target glucose level (80 mg/dL) is not met initially, EMT's should repeat the glucose measurement in several minutes.

Patients who take insulin who had a hypoglycemic episode may be safely left at home if:

- They respond completely (symptoms resolve) AND
- If someone else will be in attendance AND
- They have a repeat glucose that is at least 80 mg/dL AND
- Caloric intake (a meal) is immediately available. It is recommended that once emergent symptoms have resolved that the patient eat a meal to help prevent recurrent hypoglycemia.

These patients must receive after-care instructions if they are not being transported. Documentation in the incident response form should include

- Indication for glucose measurement (e.g., diabetes)
- Initial and subsequent glucose measurements
- If patient is on diabetes medications
- Completion of Transport Refusal
- Documentation that after-care instructions were provided

Patients who take only oral medications (i.e., no injected insulin) who experience hypoglycemia are at **high risk** of repeated hypoglycemia despite oral intake. Such patients should be **strongly advised** to seek further evaluation by a physician immediately. Contact Medical Control if patient is declining to seek care.



Matthew F. Russell, M.D.
Skagit EMS Medical Program Director