Hypoglycemia

George J. Demakis

Department of Psychology, University of North
Carolina Charlotte, Charlotte, NC, USA

Definition

Hypoglycemia is characterized by extremely low blood glucose levels. Although 60–70 mg/dL (or milligrams per deciliter) is typically cited as the lower level for normal glucose, different values have also been proposed. Hypoglycemia is commonly associated with, among other symptoms, generalized discomfort, sweating, weakness, irritability, tremor, and motor

dyscoordination. If left untreated, confusion, seizures, loss of consciousness, brain damage, and death are possible. Hypoglycemia is common in diabetes, particularly type 1 diabetes, and is usually due to an excessive dose of insulin, a hormone necessary to convert sugar and other foods to energy, or oral hypoglycemic agents, reduced food ingestion, or increased exercise. It can be treated by the ingestion of dextrose or foods that are digestible to glucose (e.g., orange juice).

Cross-References

► [Diabetes Mellitus](#)