

Checking Blood Glucose Levels in Your Baby

Women and Children's Program



What is low glucose?

One of your baby's most important sources of energy is glucose. Your baby's blood carries glucose to every cell in their body. For a baby to have the energy they need for normal activity, growth and development they need to have normal levels of glucose. Sometimes babies glucose levels becomes too low (also known as hypoglycemia).

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Why do some babies develop low blood glucose levels?

Some factors that may increase the risk of your baby developing low glucose are: small and preterm babies, large babies, babies of mothers with diabetes, and babies with infections or other medical conditions. If your baby has any of these risk factors they may be tested for low glucose levels.

How do you check my baby's blood glucose level?

Glucose levels are checked by using blood from the heel of your baby. The first test is usually done at 2 hours of age then again in 3 hours. Some babies may need more than 2 tests before their glucose levels become normal.

What is a normal glucose level for a baby?

Glucose levels need to be over 2.6 mmol/L in babies. Long periods of low glucose increase the risk of developing further issues, as well as long-term issues. Usually a low glucose in a baby lasts a few hours but may last 24 – 72 hours. Very rarely, low blood sugars can be severe or last a long time. If this happens, your baby will be examined by a doctors and may need further testing to find the cause of low glucoses.

What do I do if my baby has low glucose levels?

The most natural way to feed your baby and keep their blood sugars normal is early and regular breast feeding and skin-to-skin care. If your baby's glucose levels continue to remain low, additional feedings may be given by breast, expressed breast milk or sometimes formula. In the event that a supplement needs to be considered your doctor, nurse or midwife will discuss all of the available options with you.

Resources
www.caringkids.ca
www.cps.ca

Adapted from the Canadian Paediatric Society
Guideline at www.cps.ca

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