

# Easy Read Diabetes

## Blood Sugar

This is general information. Talk to your doctor for information made for you.

QCIDD. (2023). *Health Resources - Easy Read Diabetes*. Available from <https://www.qcidd.com.au/home/health-resources>.

## About Blood Sugars

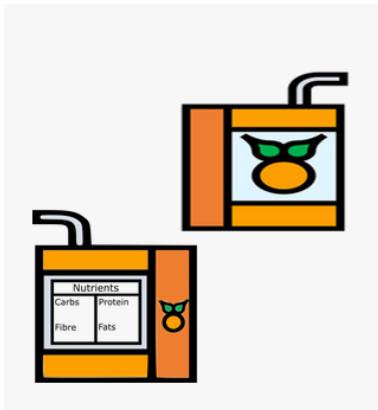


### What are your blood sugars?

Sugars start with food.

Food gives you energy.

So you can do things you like.



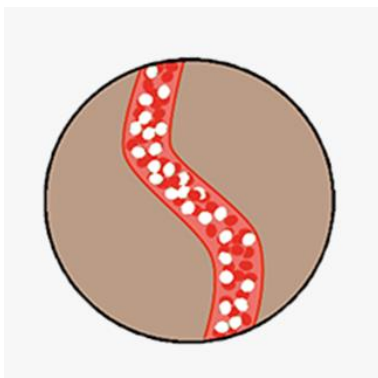
The energy in food is in sugar and carbs.



### Now.

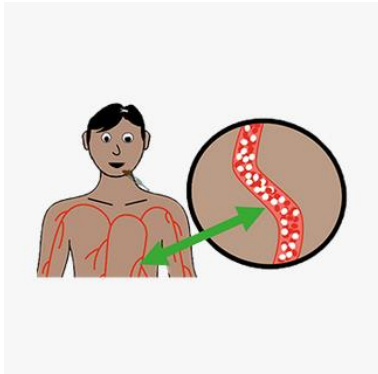
There is sugar in food.

You eat the food. The sugar is now in your tummy.



Your body moves the sugar in your tummy into your blood.

These are your blood sugars.



Your blood moves the sugar all around your body.



But  
The energy in the sugar is locked.



Insulin is the key.  
Insulin unlocks the energy in your blood.



Insulin does not work properly for some people.



Some people with diabetes need to take insulin.



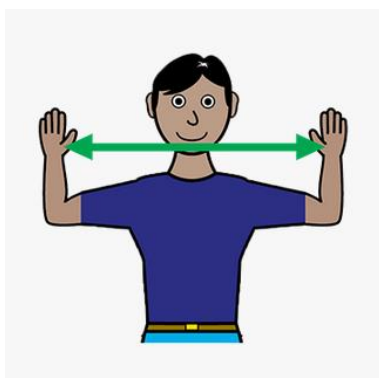
Blood sugars that are not unlocked by insulin stay in your blood.

This can cause high blood sugar.



Sometimes the insulin unlocks too much sugar.

This can cause low blood sugars.



Keep your blood sugars in range.

This can help you stay healthy.

## Why your Blood Sugars change



**Your blood sugars change all the time.**

Like when



- you eat

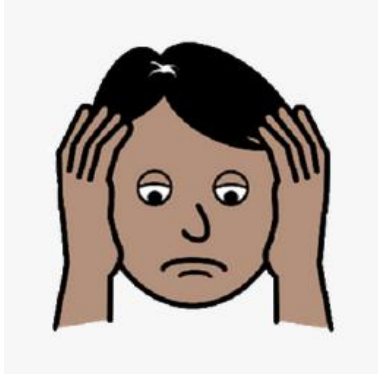


- you do exercise

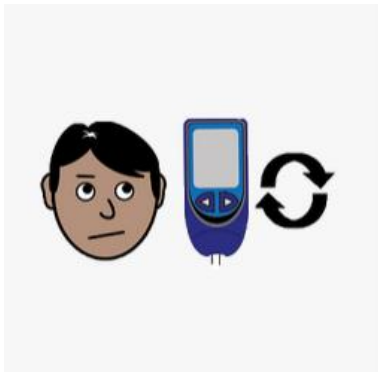
They change when



- you are sick

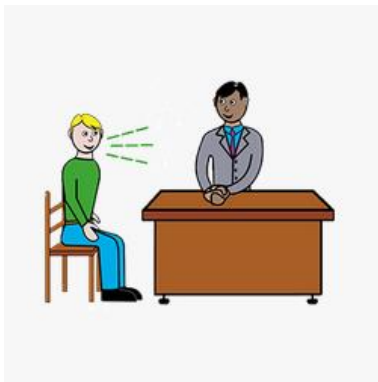


- you feel stressed



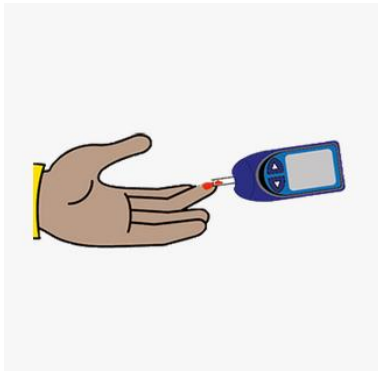
**Sometimes you do not know why your blood sugars change.**

It is OK.



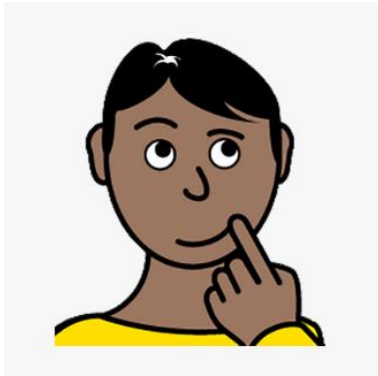
Talk to your diabetes team when it happens a lot.

## When to Check your Blood Sugars



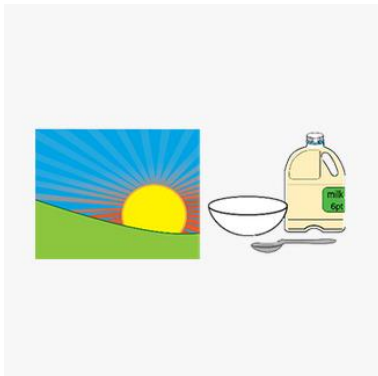
**When you take insulin you need to check your blood sugars.**

You will need to do it more than 1 time every day.

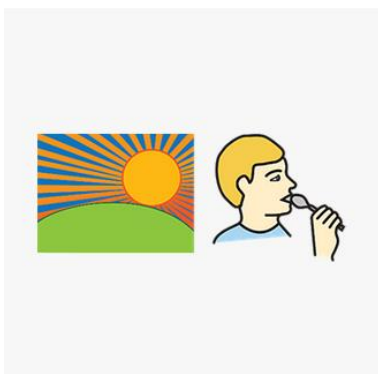


**Check before you eat.**

Like before

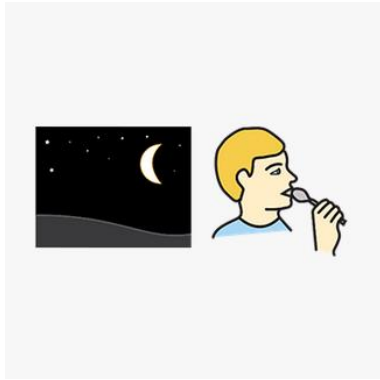


- breakfast



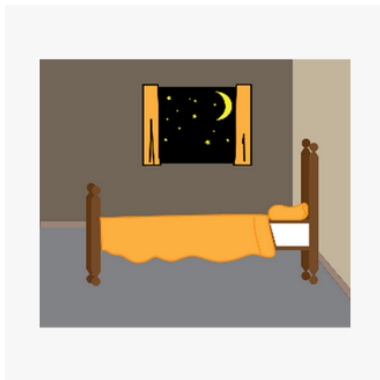
- lunch



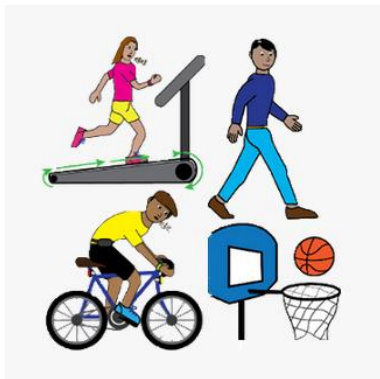


- dinner

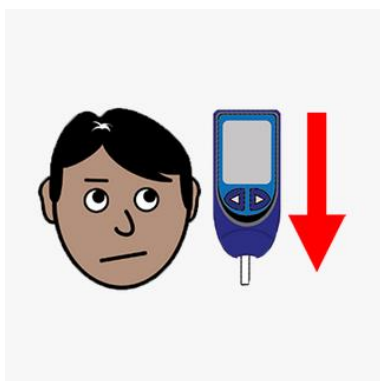
**You must check your blood sugar**



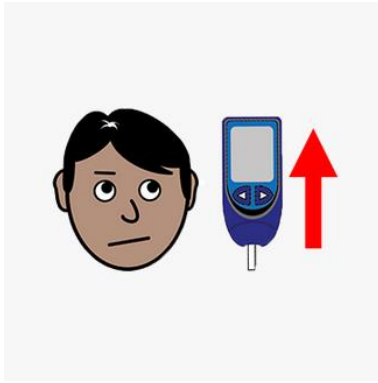
- before you sleep



- before you do exercise



- when your blood sugars feel low



- when your blood sugars feel high



- when you feel sick



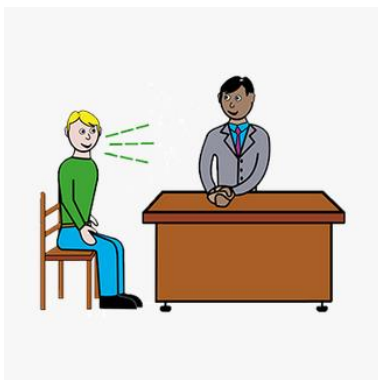
- when you feel stressed

**But**

It is different for everyone.

Talk to your doctor.

They will tell you when you must check your blood sugars.



## What do your Blood Sugars Mean?



Your blood sugar can be

- high

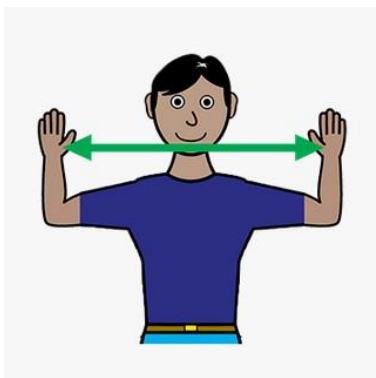


- normal

It is also called in range

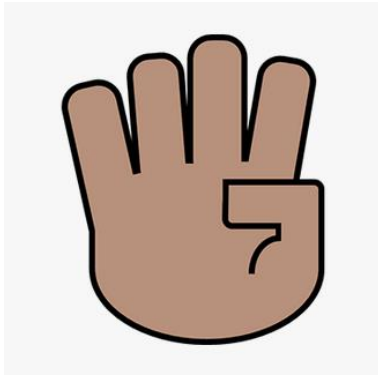


- low



**Your doctor gives you a target range.**

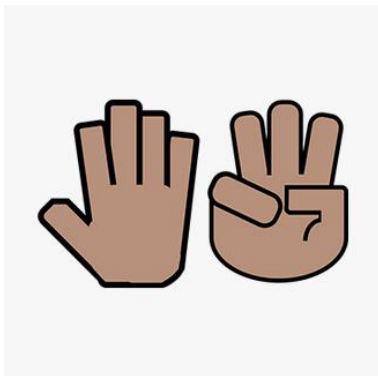
Your blood sugars need to be inside the range.



**Your range has 2 numbers. It has**

- a small number. Like 4

**And**

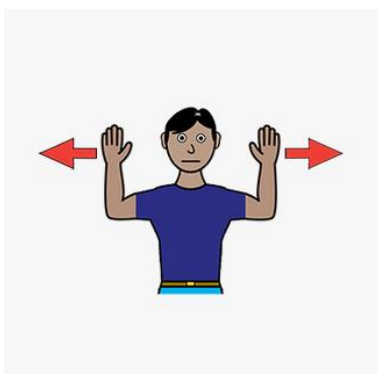


- a big number. Like 8



Keep your blood sugar inside the range.

It will keep you healthy.



**Your blood sugars can go outside your target range.**

Like they are



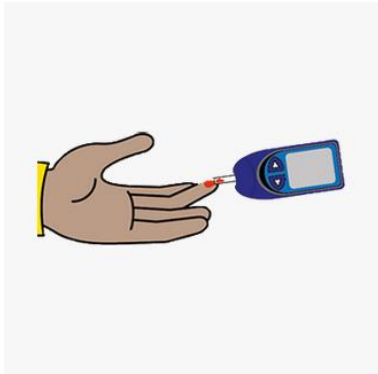
- less than 4
- **this is low blood sugar**



- more than 10
- **this is high blood sugar**

## Low Blood Sugar

### What is low blood sugar?



You do your finger prick.

Your meter has a number on it.



When the number is less than 4 you have low blood sugar.

**Like when the number starts with**

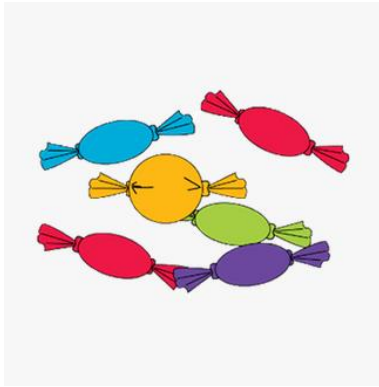


**3**

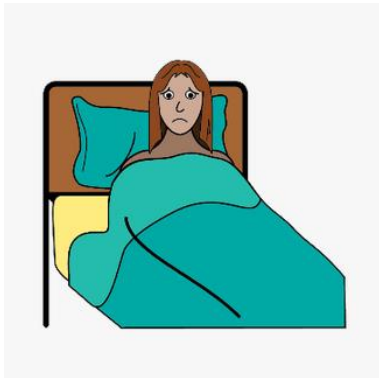
**Or**



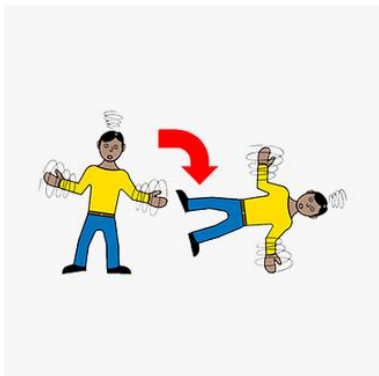
**2**



You must eat sugar.



**Low blood sugar makes you sick.**



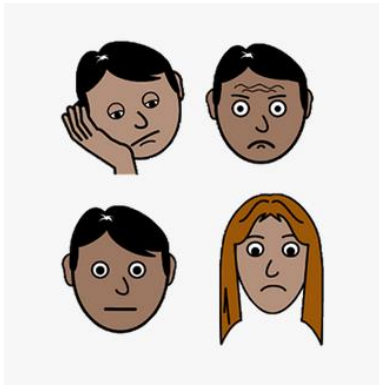
When you do not treat your low blood sugar you can pass out.



You need a special needle.

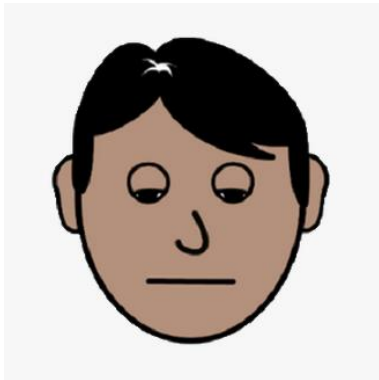
The ambulance or doctor must give it to you.

## What does low blood sugar feel like?

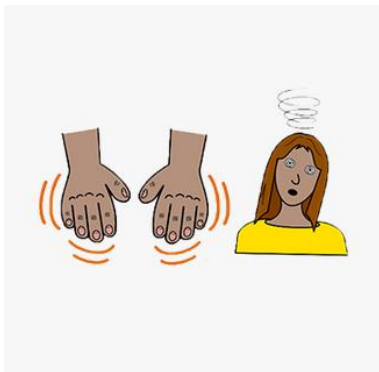


Low blood sugar feels different for everyone.

### You may feel

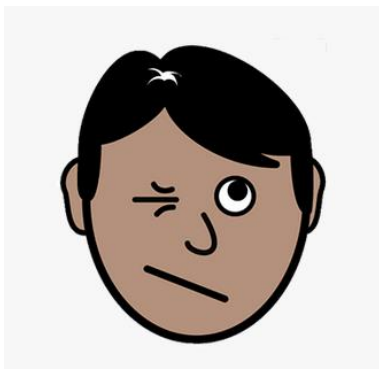


- tired
- weak



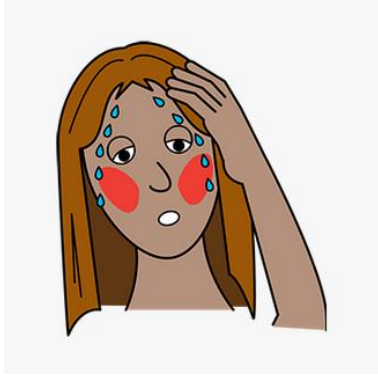
- part of your body is shaking
- dizzy

### You may also feel

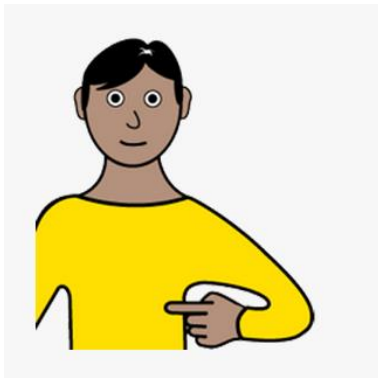


- confused





- sweaty



**You need to know what low blood sugar feels like for you.**

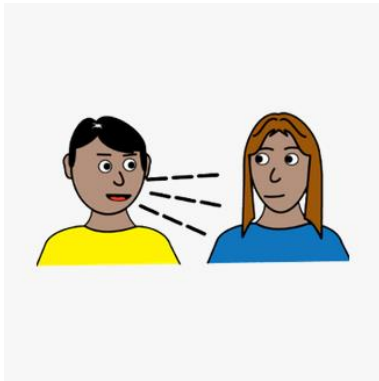
**Use our worksheet.**

Write down what low blood sugar feels like for you.

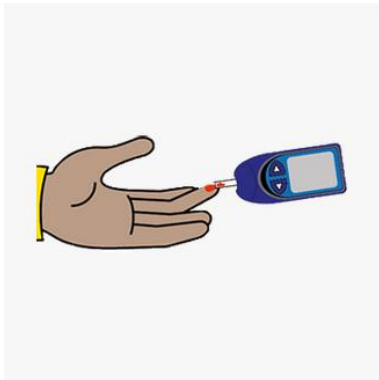


It helps you learn about your low blood sugar.

## You think you have low blood sugar. What do you do?

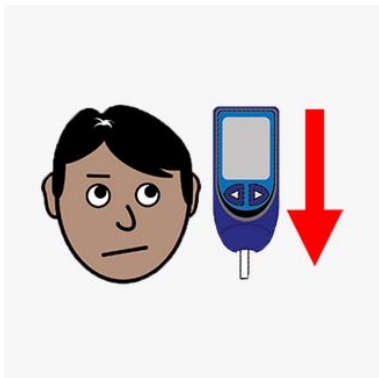


1. Tell a support person.

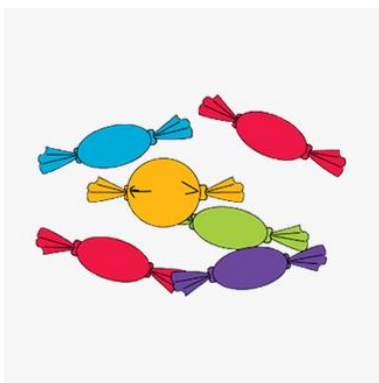


Then

2. Check your blood sugars



Your test says you have low blood sugars.



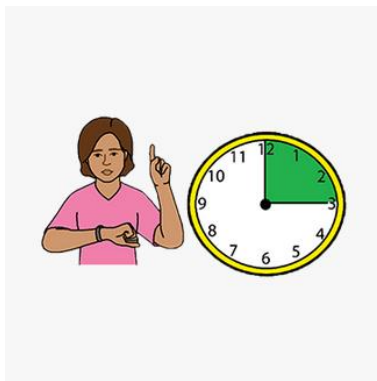
3. Eat food with sugar. Like

- lollies
- 5 or 7 jelly beans



or

- half a glass of juice
- half a glass of soft drink
- the drink must not be sugar free

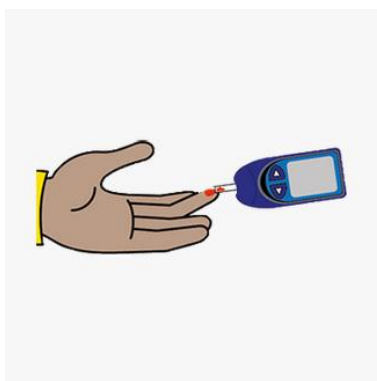


**Then**

4. Wait for 15 minutes.



Wash your hands.



6. Check your blood sugars again.



Is the number less than 4?

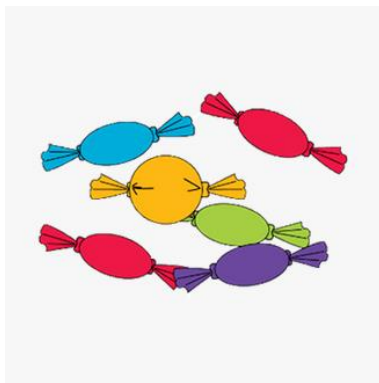
Like it starts with

- 3

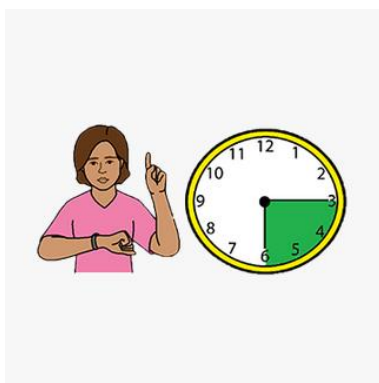


or

- 2



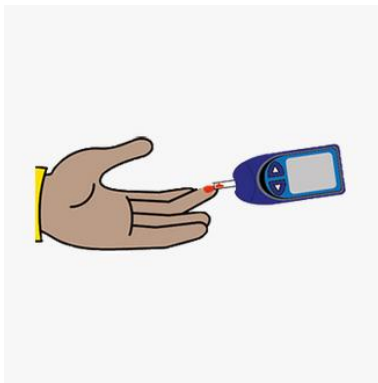
You must eat **more** lollies.



Wait 15 more minutes.



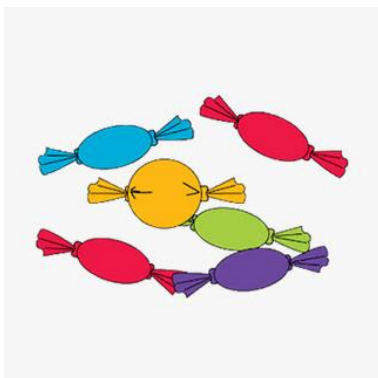
Wash your hands.



Check your blood sugars again.



Get help if your blood sugar is still less than 4.



You may have to eat more sugary food.



You may need to go to the hospital.

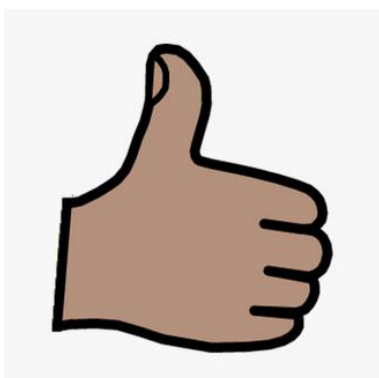
Is your blood sugar more than 4?



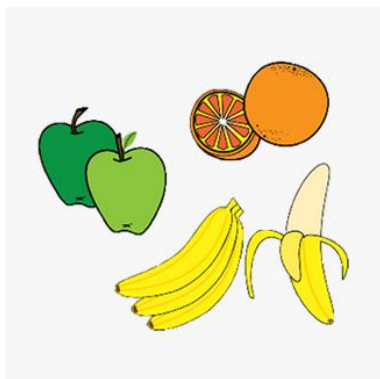
Like it starts with 5.



Or 6.

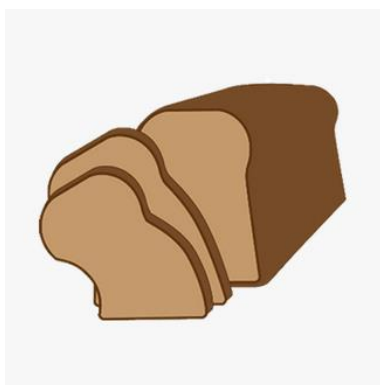


You are OK.



Now you must eat a small snack. Like

- a piece of fruit



- one slice of bread



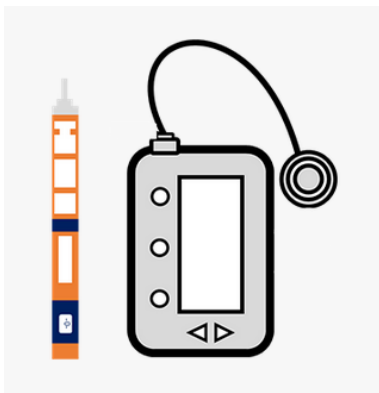
- a glass of milk

## Why do you get low blood sugar?



You miss a meal.

Or



You have too much insulin.

Like it was too much for the food you ate.

Or



You do exercise you do not plan to. Like

- a walk
- a bike ride
- play sports

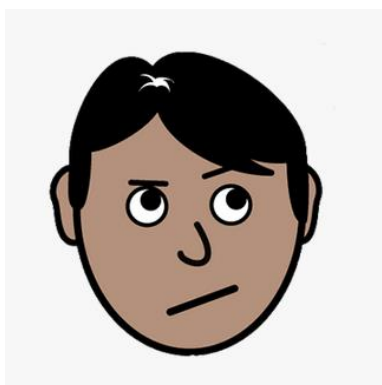
Or



You drink alcohol.

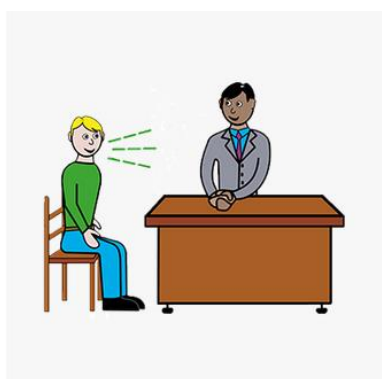
It can be 1 day after drinking alcohol.





Sometimes you do not know why your blood sugar went low.

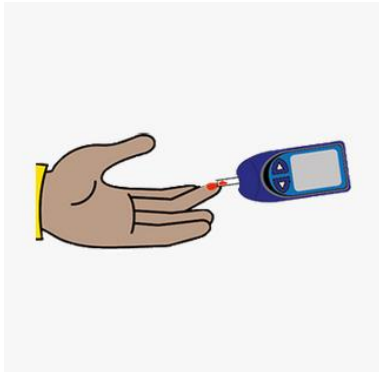
That is okay.



Talk to your diabetes team when it happens a lot.

## High Blood Sugar

### What is High Blood Sugar?



You do your finger prick.

Your meter has a number on it.



When your number is more than 10 you have high blood sugar.

Like when the number starts with



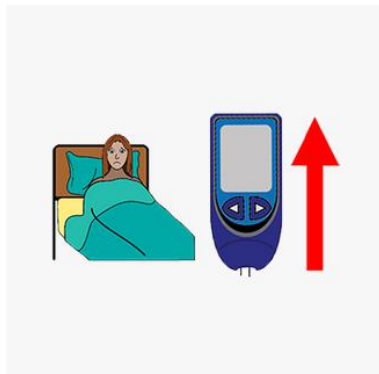
11



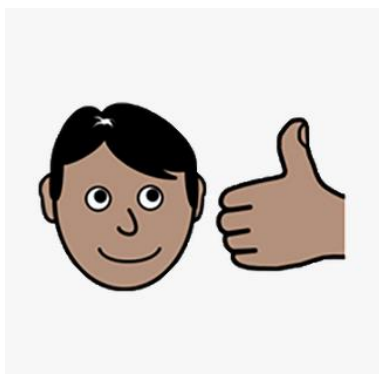
or 12



or more. Like 15.



High blood sugar can make you very sick.

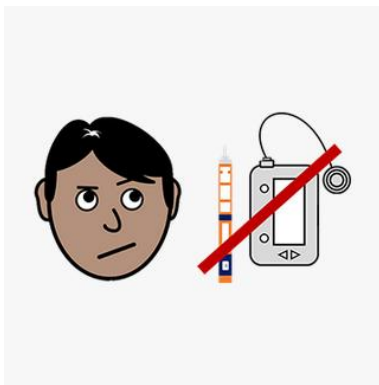


It is important to take care of your high blood sugar.

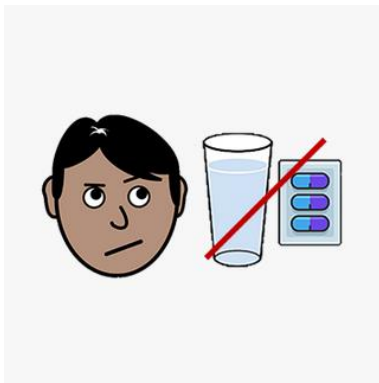
## Why do you get high blood sugar?



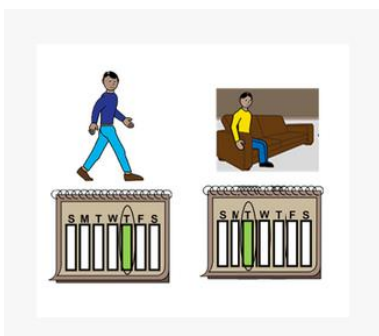
- you are sick



- you forget to take your insulin



- you forget to take your diabetes medicine

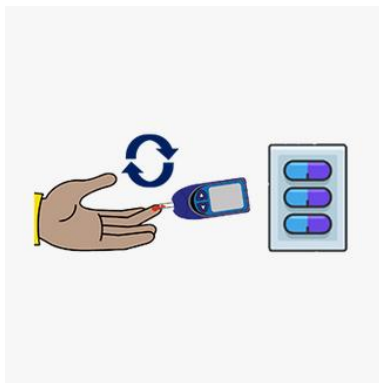


- you change how much you move around

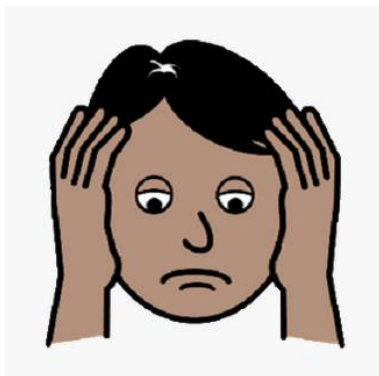


- you eat more carbs. It was more than you normally eat.

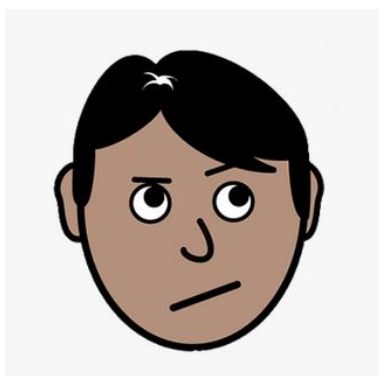
### It might be because



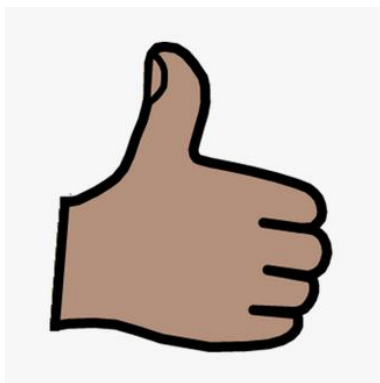
- You take other medicines. They change your blood sugars. Like steroids.



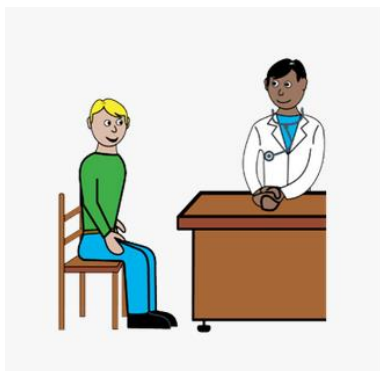
- you feel stressed.



Sometimes you cannot work out why your blood sugars are high.



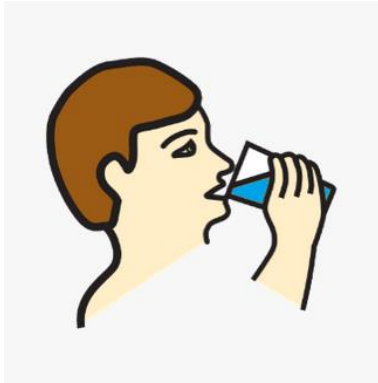
It is OK.



See your GP when it happens a lot.

## What does High Blood Sugar feel like?

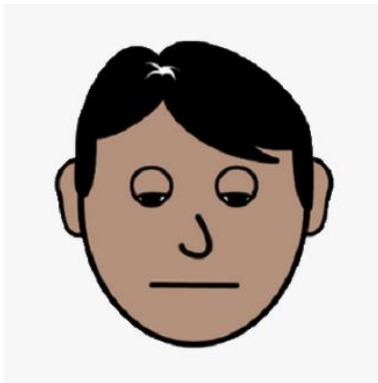
**It may be**



You want to drink all the time.



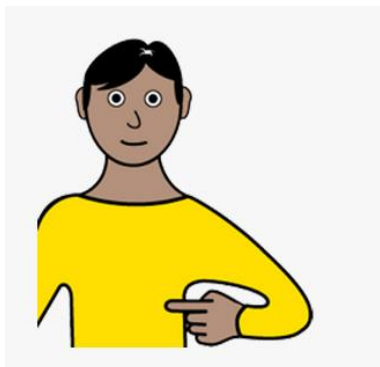
You pee a lot.



You feel very tired.



You want to eat all the time.



High blood sugar feels different for everyone.

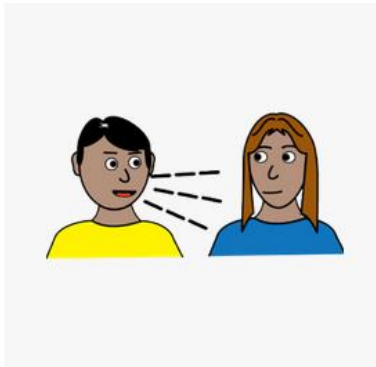
Learn what it feels like for you.

**Use our worksheet.**

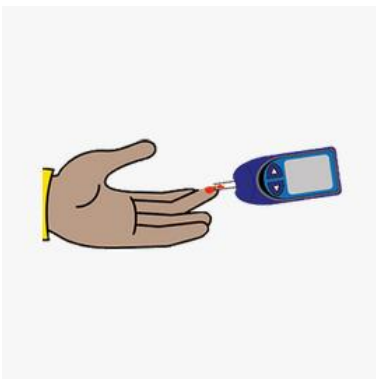
Write down what high blood sugar feels like for you.



## What to do when you have High Blood Sugar

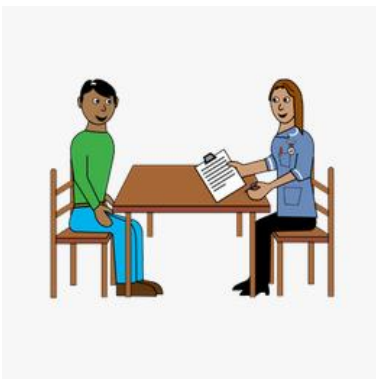


3. Tell a support person.



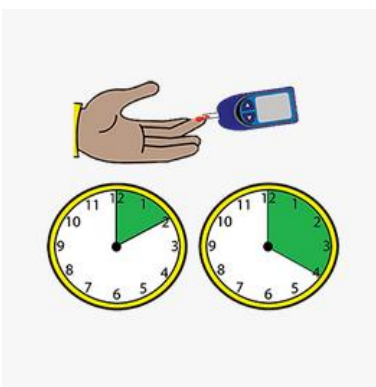
2. Check your blood sugars.

### Work out what to do next



Ask your diabetes educator to make a plan for you.

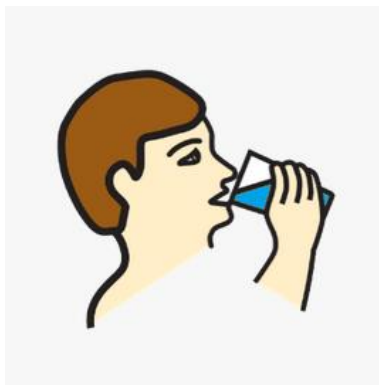
You might need to take more short acting insulin when you have high blood sugars.



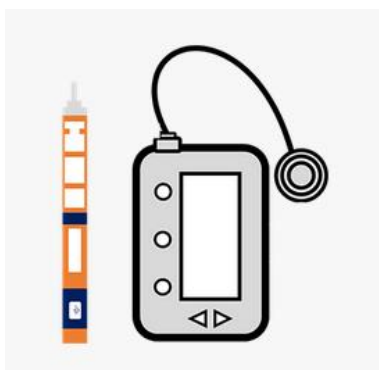
1. Test your blood sugars more.



4. Test for ketones.



5. Drink lots of water.
- Having high blood sugars makes you thirsty and pee a lot.



**Do you get high blood sugars a lot?**

Talk to your diabetes team

- You might have to change your insulin dose
- Your diabetes team will help you

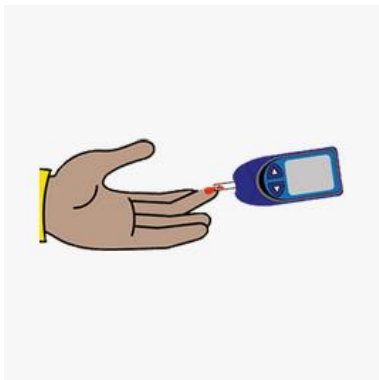
## You may need to go to the hospital when you have high blood sugar



### Go to hospital when

You are vomiting so much you cannot eat or drink.

or



Your blood sugars stay high.

They are not going down.

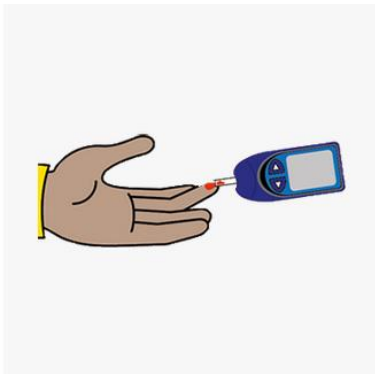
or



There are ketones in your blood or pee.

It is **very** important to look after your high blood sugar.

## How to check your blood sugar



### You can use

- A blood sugar meter

or



- a CGM sensor. It is also called continuous glucose monitoring

or



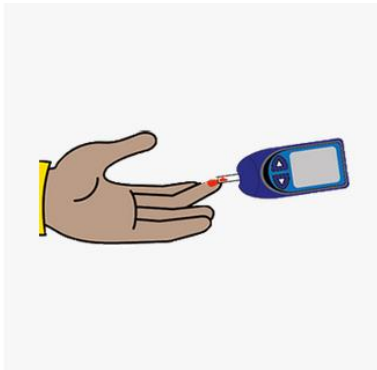
- a libre sensor. It is also called flash glucose monitoring



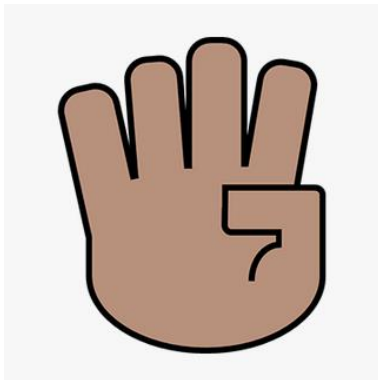
The NDSS can help you pay for

- blood sugar strips
- libre
- CGM

## How to use a blood sugar meter



Every meter is different.



**It takes four steps to use a meter.**



1. Wash your hands



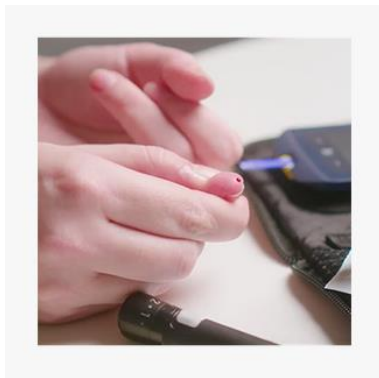
2. Put the strip in the blood sugar meter.

Make sure the meter is on.



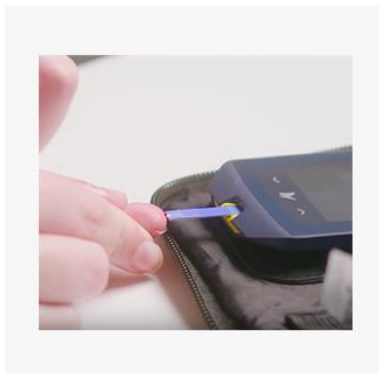
3. Prick your finger with a finger pricker.

It is also called a lancet.



A bit of blood will come out.

It may hurt a bit.



4. You put the blood on a testing strip.

- You can squeeze your finger to get more blood
- The meter will beep or change picture when there is enough blood.

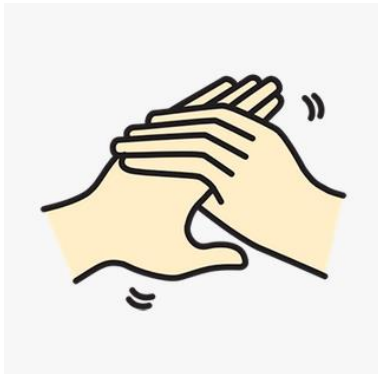


The meter will show you a number.

It is your blood sugar.

**Remember to**

- Prick a different finger each time
- Prick on the side of your finger

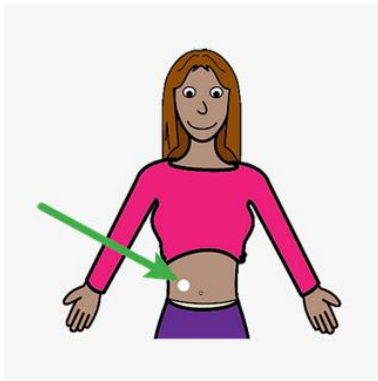


- Warm up your fingers
- Rub them or run them under warm water
- It is harder to get blood when your fingers are cold.

You can watch our video on using a blood sugar meter here:

<https://www.qcidd.com.au/diabetes/how-to-use-a-blood-sugar-meter/>

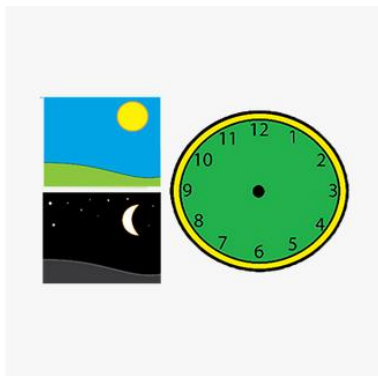
## CGM – Continuous Glucose Monitoring



A CGM is a small sensor.

You can wear it on most places on your body.

It goes on your skin.



CGM measures your blood sugar all the time.



You can check your blood sugars on

- Your phone

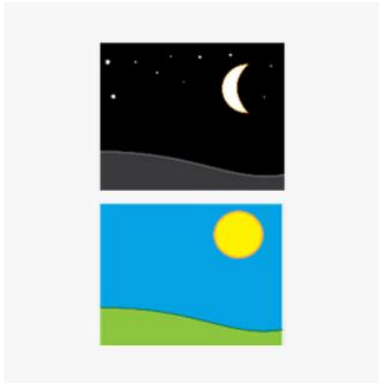
or

- Your CGM machine

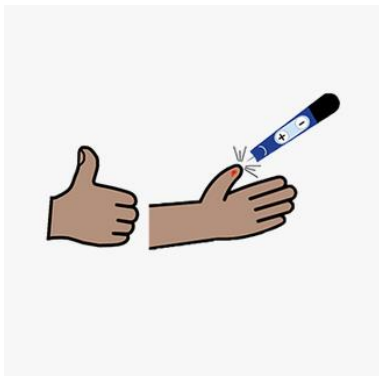


**The good things about CGM are**





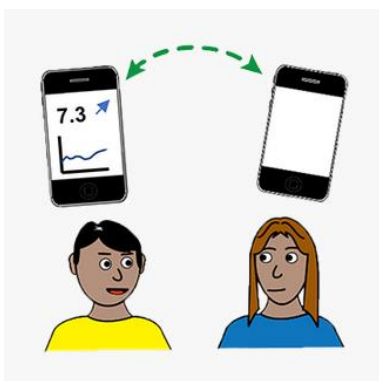
- You have blood sugars from the whole day



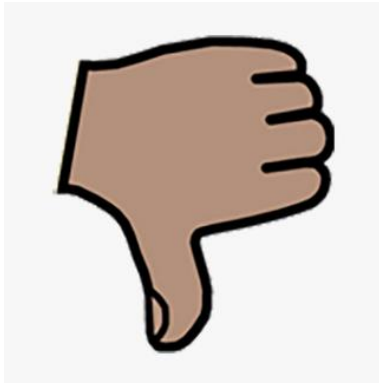
- You can do less finger pricks



- You can have alarms  
They tell you when your sugars are high or low



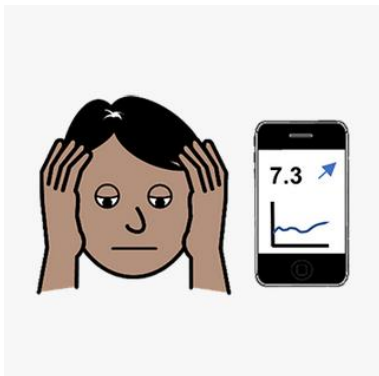
- You can share your results with other people



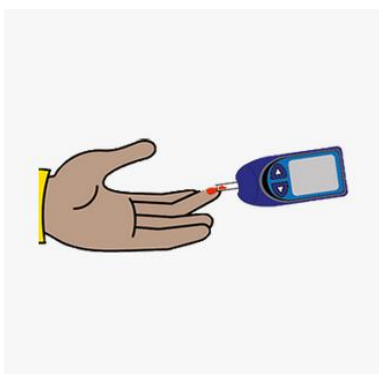
### The bad things about CGM are



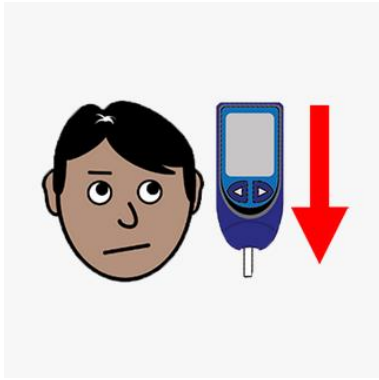
- You must wear a sensor.  
It can feel itchy or annoying.



- It gives you a lot of information

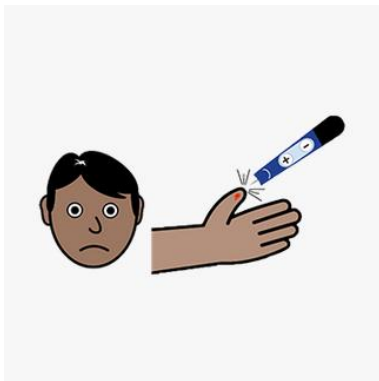


- You still have to do some finger prick checks



**You may use CGM because**

- You cannot feel low blood sugars.
- The CGM gives you an alarm



- You do not like doing finger pricks

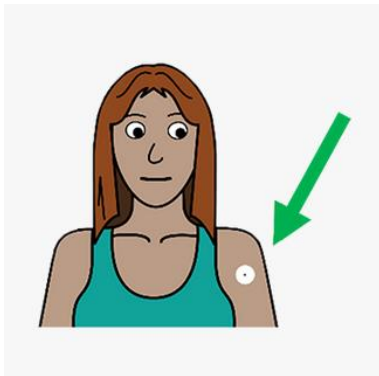


- CGM gives you a lot of information

## Libre



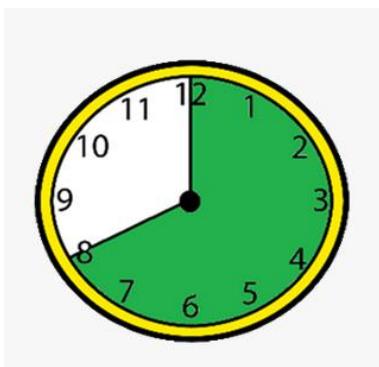
The Libre is a way to check your blood sugars.



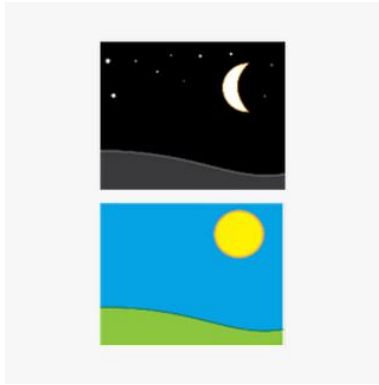
You wear a small sensor on your arm.  
It is like CGM.



You can scan the sensor with a reader  
or phone.  
It tells you your blood sugars.



You must scan every 8 hours.

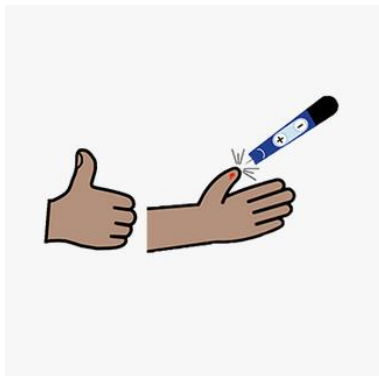


### The good things about the Libre are

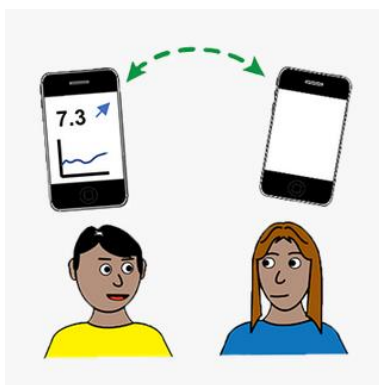
- You have blood sugars from the whole day



- You can have alarms. They tell you when your sugars are high or low



- You can do less finger pricks.



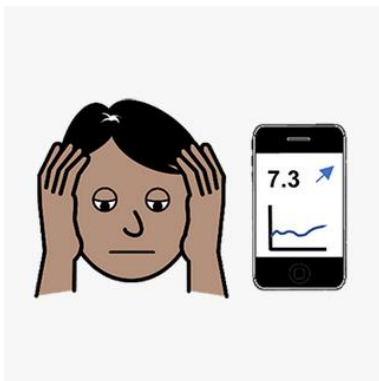
- you can share your results with other people



**The bad things about the Libre are**



- You must wear a sensor.
- It can feel itchy or annoying

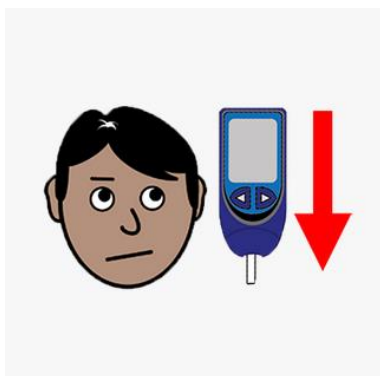


- It gives you a lot of information

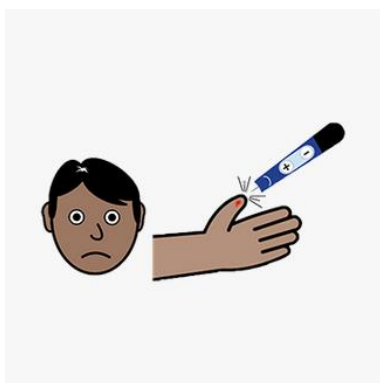


- You must scan every 8 hours
- You lose information when forget to scan. Like at night.

**You may use Libre because**



- You cannot feel low blood sugars. The Libre gives you an alarm.



- you do not like doing finger pricks



- Libre gives you a lot of information

