



# Live Well, Work Well

Health and wellness tips for your work, home and life—brought to you by Catskill Area Schools Employee Benefit Plan (CASEBP)



## MANAGING YOUR BLOOD SUGAR

Blood sugar refers to the amount of glucose in your blood. Knowing and managing your blood sugar level can help prevent a variety of health problems.

### Why Is It Important?

Glucose is the sugar your body uses for energy, metabolism and proper brain function. The body needs blood sugar to stay at a relatively consistent level, and regulates this level through hormones. An anabolic hormone called insulin decreases the level of glucose, while catabolic hormones raise your level. Too high or too low blood sugar can cause many severe health problems. Diabetes occurs when your blood glucose is too high, as a result of your body not producing or absorbing enough insulin.

### Normal Glucose Levels

For non-diabetics, a normal glucose level is between 70 and 110 mg/dL (or up to 125 mg/dL shortly after eating). Normal levels for a diabetic are generally between 90 and 130 mg/dL (up to 180 mg/dL after meals).

### Hyperglycemia

Hyperglycemia refers to glucose levels that exceed the normal range, and is caused by infections, stress, certain medications and overproduction of hormones.

Hyperglycemia is usually the first sign of diabetes, and can lead to heart disease, blindness, nerve damage and other health problems. In diabetics, hyperglycemic episodes are a serious problem and can be caused by eating too much, eating too many carbohydrates, strenuous physical activity or skipping medication. Symptoms include increased thirst, frequent urination, fatigue, blurred vision and dry mouth.

Diabetics can prevent hyperglycemic episodes by following their doctor-recommended diet, checking their levels often, exercising and drinking plenty of water. Non-diabetics can avoid hyperglycemia by drinking plenty of water, exercising regularly, staying at a healthy weight, eating a balanced diet and avoiding simple carbohydrates and sugary foods.

### Hypoglycemia

Low levels of blood glucose (hypoglycemia) can be caused by malnutrition, increased exercise, not eating enough food, kidney failure or liver disease. Diabetics can suffer from hypoglycemia if they take too much insulin. Common symptoms include cold sweats, confusion, blurry vision, fatigue, headache, hunger, trembling and rapid heart rate.

Diabetics can manage low blood sugar by eating a snack or drinking a beverage containing sugar. Non-diabetics with severe hypoglycemia may require immediate medical attention, as it can cause blindness, coma or even death. Those without diabetes can also change their diet to help prevent episodes of low blood sugar. Your doctor may suggest eating small, frequent meals with complex carbohydrates, fiber and fat—and avoiding simple sugars, alcohol and fruit juice.