

Mandatory for everyone

In Quebec, driving is a privilege, not a right. Everyone who drives a road vehicle must meet certain health and vision requirements. It is mandatory to report the state of your health to the SAAQ:

- When applying for a driver's licence
- When renewing your driver's licence
- Within 30 days of any change in your medical condition that could affect your ability to drive

A false or misleading statement could result in a licence suspension or a fine.



Resources

Société de l'assurance automobile du Québec (SAAQ)

General information about diabetes and driving
saaq.gouv.qc.ca/en/road-safety/behaviours/health-drivers/medical-conditions

Information about mandatory medical examinations
saaq.gouv.qc.ca/en/drivers-licences/state-health-licence

Regulation respecting access to driving a road vehicle in connection with the health of drivers

legisquebec.gouv.qc.ca/en/document/cr/C-24.2,%20r.%208

Questions about diabetes?

InfoDiabetes Service
514 259-3422
1 800 361-3504
infodiabete@diabete.qc.ca

Diabetes School
Universi D
universi-d.com

Diabetes  Québec
diabete.qc.ca

Diabète  Québec

Driving and diabetes

What you need to know



Specific to diabetes

Diabetes is one of the medical conditions that can affect the safe operation of a road vehicle.

The main reasons are the risks associated with:

— **Low blood sugar** – a drop in blood sugar below 4 mmol/L, because its symptoms can compromise your alertness and your vision (e.g., dizziness, weakness, confusion, loss of consciousness)

— **High blood sugar** – a rise in blood sugar levels above target values, because its symptoms can also compromise your alertness and your vision (e.g., difficulty concentrating, drowsiness, blurred vision)

— **Diabetes complications**, such as eye problems (retinopathy) and nerve problems (neuropathy). Retinopathy can affect your vision, while neuropathy can decrease the sensitivity in your feet. With less feeling in your feet, you may have trouble moving them quickly if, for example, you need to brake to avoid an accident.

Some treatments for diabetes increase the risk of low blood sugar. Which one do you take?

- I inject insulin.
- I take gliclazide (Diamicon® or Diamicon® MR).
- I take glimepiride (Amaryl®).
- I take glyburide (DiaBeta®).
- I take repaglinide (GlucoNorm®).

If you checked any of the options above, it is important to take the following precautions to reduce the risks associated with low blood sugar when driving:

- ✓ Carry a blood glucose meter with you or wear a continuous glucose-monitoring device (e.g., FreeStyle Libre, Dexcom).
- ✓ Always keep fast-absorbing carbohydrates on hand when driving.
- ✓ Measure your blood sugar before getting behind the wheel, at least every four hours on the road, and if you experience any symptoms of low blood sugar.
- ✓ Measure your blood sugar more often if there are factors that could increase your risk of low blood sugar, such as recent physical activity or having delayed or skipped a meal.

Did you know?

As a person with diabetes, you must **have a medical examination at least every two years.**

You are required to **report to the SAAQ, within 30 days, any episode of severe low blood sugar** that required the assistance of another person to treat or that caused you to lose consciousness.



If your blood sugar level is less than 4 mmol/L, be sure to:

- **Stop your vehicle in a safe place.**
- **Treat the low blood sugar:**
 - 1. Take 15 g of fast-absorbing carbohydrates, such as:**
 - 4 tablets of Dex4®
 - 150 ml (2/3 cup) of regular soft drink, fruit drink or fruit juice
 - 2. Wait 15 minutes while resting.**
 - 3. Measure your blood sugar again:**
 - If the level is still less than 4 mmol/L, treat again by following steps 1 to 3.
 - If the level is 4 mmol/L or higher but your regular meal is scheduled for more than an hour later, have a snack containing 15 g of carbohydrates and a source of protein, such as 60 ml (1/4 cup) of mixed nuts and dried fruit that you leave in the glove compartment of your car.
- **Wait 40 minutes** before getting behind the wheel again after checking that your blood sugar is at a safe level, i.e., above 5 mmol/L. This way, you can be sure that your alertness is back to normal and that you have reduced the risk of having another episode of low blood sugar.

If, on the other hand, you have high blood sugar and experience symptoms that could affect your ability to drive (e.g., trouble concentrating, drowsiness, blurred vision), stop your vehicle and take the necessary steps to make sure you are safe to drive again.

The recommendations in this document may not apply to certain situations, such as driving a commercial vehicle or when there is a history of severe episodes of hypoglycemia.