

## When is a hypo likely to happen?

- If a meal is missed or delayed
- If too little starchy food has been eaten at the previous meal, such as bread, pasta, rice, cereals or potato
- If you go to bed without your 'usual' supper snack
- If you take more exercise than usual. This includes shopping, gardening, spring cleaning, dancing etc. You may have a hypo several hours after exercising
- If you have lost weight (and you may need less medication)
- If you drink alcohol without eating
- If you change injection sites from a lumpy area to an area without lumps

Record the hypo in your blood sugar testing diary. If hypos are occurring more frequently than usual, or if hypos are becoming more difficult to treat, see your doctor or nurse to discuss this. Try not to wait too long to do this.

## Be prepared

Keep some fast-acting sugar with you at all times (especially when you are out of your house) eg glucose or dextrose tablets. If you become hypo you will then be able to take something sugary immediately.

Hypoglycaemia can happen during the night so keep some glucose or dextrose tablets in the bedroom.

### **WARNING**

***Untreated hypoglycaemia may result in loss of consciousness.***

***Do not give an unconscious person anything by mouth.***

***If loss of consciousness occurs seek urgent medical help for that person by ringing 999 (emergency services).***

# Hypoglycaemia



## Hypoglycaemia or a 'Hypo'

Occurs when the level of sugar in your blood falls to 4 mmols/L or below, which is too low and you will feel unwell.

### Who is at risk of having a hypo?

#### *You might have a hypo*

- If you take tablets
- If you take insulin
- If you take a combination of tablets and insulin

#### *You will not have a hypo*

- If your diabetes is controlled by diet alone
- If your diabetes is controlled by Metformin only

### How will you know you are having a hypo?

You will learn to recognise your own symptoms. Symptoms vary from person to person and will usually include one or more of the following:

Sweating	Shakiness	Giddiness	Anxiety	Hunger
Tiredness	Confusion	Dizziness	Palpitations	Headache
Tingling lips or tongue	Difficulty concentrating	Blurred vision		

***These symptoms are known as 'warning signs'***

## How to treat a hypo

**Never** ignore warning signs of hypoglycaemia. Stop whatever you are doing and treat the hypo immediately to prevent your blood sugar falling even lower than 4 mmols/L. There are two steps to treating hypos and **you must follow both step 1 and step 2.**

### Step 1

Take one of the following

- three glucose or dextrose tablets
- 50ml Lucozade (half a small glass) **not** Lucozade Sport
- 100ml fruit juice (one small glass)
- 200ml lemonade (one tumbler) not diet type
- two teaspoonfuls of sugar in water
- A mini/fun size chocolate bar\*

The suggested items above are all fast acting sugars and so will raise your blood sugar level quickly.

\* Although chocolate will raise your blood sugar level, it takes the longest to digest and the other items should be used first.

**Wait 5-10 minutes and recheck blood sugar.**

- If below 4 mmol/l repeat Step 1.
- If 4 mmol/l or above go to Step 2.



## Step 2

Take one of the following starchy foods, which will prevent your blood sugar from falling too low again.

- Your next meal (if it is due in the next 5-10 minutes)
- Toast or bread
- Sandwich
- Bowl of cereal
- Two digestive biscuits/two to three plain biscuits

After following steps 1 and 2, sit down for five minutes and allow the food to work.