

Help with hypoglycaemia (‘hypos’)

Diabetes and Endocrinology Patient Information Leaflet

What is a hypo?

Hypo is short for hypoglycaemia which means low blood glucose (sugar). Hypo is the name given to a condition which occurs when your blood glucose falls below 4mmol/l.

What causes a hypo?

The following are the main causes:

- Not enough food and drink, or missed meals
- Too much insulin
- Over exertion or a lot of exercise
- Alcohol

Are there different levels of hypos?

Yes, there are three levels:

- Mild – the most common. You may feel dizziness, trembling, tingling hands, feet, lips or tongue, blurred vision, occasional headaches and difficulty in concentrating
- Moderate – when you may become irrational, bad tempered and confused
- Severe – this can result in unconsciousness

How should a hypo be treated?

As a diabetic, involvement of your family is crucial and they must know what to do in advance. This will have been discussed with you in the diabetes clinic. In every case, the first aim is to raise your blood glucose level.

Check your blood glucose level and if it is less than 4mmol/l, you should have one of the following:

- Three to five glucose tablets with a glass of water
- Three to four heaped teaspoons of sugar in water
- 150 to 200ml of pure fruit juice, for example, orange

After 10 minutes, recheck your blood glucose. If it is still below 4mmol/l, have more glucose tablets, sugar or juice as above.

After 10 minutes, recheck your blood glucose again and if it is above 4mmol/l and your meal is not due, have a small starchy snack such as a sandwich. After three treatments, if your blood glucose is still not above 4mmol/l; or if you start to lose consciousness, you or your family should call 999.

How can I avoid getting into difficulty?

- Always carry glucose tablets, dextrose tablets or sugar lumps and a sweet drink if possible.
- Always carry identification saying you have diabetes.
- Make sure your friends, relatives and people at work know about hypos and what they can do to help.
- Do not swim alone, avoid driving alone and do not drive if your blood glucose may be low, for instance, just before a meal.
- Try not to miss meals.
- Take heed if someone who knows your condition tells you that you need glucose.
- If you have recurring hypos (the hypos keep happening), consult your diabetes clinic or GP.

Can I find out more?

Diabetes UK

Tel: 0345 123 2399

Website: www.diabetes.org.uk

If you have any questions, or if there is anything you do not understand about this leaflet, please contact:

Diabetes Team on 01384 244399 (9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday)

Russells Hall Hospital switchboard number: 01384 456111

This leaflet can be downloaded or printed from:

<http://dudleygroup.nhs.uk/services-and-wards/diabetes-and-endocrinology/>

If you have any feedback on this patient information leaflet, please email patient.information@dgh.nhs.uk

This leaflet can be made available in large print, audio version and in other languages, please call 0800 073 0510.

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此宣传单可提供大字版本、音频版本和其它语言版本，请拨打电话：0800 073 0510。

Ulotka dostępna jest również w dużym druku, wersji audio lub w innym języku. W tym celu zadzwoń pod numer 0800 073 0510.

ਇਹ ਪਰਚਾ ਵੱਡੇ ਅੱਖਰਾਂ, ਬੋਲ ਕੇ ਰੀਕਾਰਡ ਕੀਤਾ ਹੋਇਆ ਅਤੇ ਦੂਸਰੀਆਂ ਭਾਸ਼ਾਵਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਵੀ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤ ਹੋ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ, 0800 073 0510 ਤੇ ਫੋਨ ਕਰੋ ਜੀ।

Aceasta brosură poate fi pusă la dispoziție tipărită cu caractere mari, versiune audio sau în alte limbi, pentru acest lucru va rugăm sunați la 0800 073 0510.

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