

Patient information

Hypo's

Diabetes and Endocrinology

Hypo is short for hypoglycaemia, which means low blood glucose level. Maintaining your blood glucose level is a balance between the glucose that you take in (from food) and the glucose that you store or use up as energy.

Hypo's can be caused by:

- Taking too much insulin.
- Missed or late meals.
- Not enough food or missing starchy carbohydrate foods.
- More activity than normal.
- Alcohol.
- Hot weather.
- Poor condition of injection sites.

What does a hypo feel like?

The way you feel when your blood glucose level is low varies from person to person, you will recognise your own warning signs, which might include:

- Sweating.
- Dizziness.
- Palpitations.
- Wobbly and confused.
- Headache.
- Tingling lips or tongue.
- You may have no symptoms.
- If you test your blood glucose it will be less than 4mmol/l.

Other people around you might notice that you are:

- Pale.
- Slurring your words.
- Act out of character.

Treating a hypo

As soon as you feel that you may be going into a hypo, you should stop what you are doing and take **one** of the following quick acting sugars, such as:

- 200 ml of Lucozade™.
- 150 ml (a small can) of **non-diet** fizzy drink.
- 200 ml (a small carton) of smooth orange juice.
- Five or six dextrose tablets.
- Five Jelly Babies.

If you do not feel better and your blood glucose level is still less than 4 mmol/l after ten minutes, repeat one of these treatments. When you start to feel better, if you are not due to eat a meal, you will need to eat some starchy food, such as a snack e.g. two plain biscuits or a slice of toast and monitor your blood glucose again afterwards.

If you feel hypo before your insulin; you need to correct your 'hypo' and then have your insulin and meal as normal.

When not at home always carry some form of sugar with you, like dextrose sweets. You should start to feel better after about ten minutes, if you don't, take **one** of the above again.

Occasionally you may not spot your warning signs and you may pass out (become unconscious). Explain to your family and friends that if they find you unconscious they:

- **Must call 999 immediately for an ambulance.**
- **Must not give an unconscious or semi-conscious person anything by mouth as they may choke.**

Important

Always carry identification on you that says you have diabetes.

Glucagon

You may have heard about an injection called glucagon. This comes in a kit form and can be easily given to you by a friend or family member if you pass out due to low blood glucose level. Many people with diabetes do not need to have these kits at home. For more information about glucagon kits contact your diabetes specialist nurse.

Please Note:

- If you are having frequent hypos or want more information contact your diabetes team.
- Hypo's may well affect your safety whilst driving; for further information contact your diabetes team or **consult** <https://www.gov.uk/diabetes-driving>.

Feedback

Your feedback is important to us and helps us influence care in the future.

Following your discharge from hospital or attendance at your outpatient appointment you will receive a text asking if you would recommend our service to others. Please take the time to text back, you will not be charged for the text and can opt out at any point. Your co-operation is greatly appreciated.

Further Information

Liverpool University Hospital
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L7 8YP

Tel: 0151 706 2829
Text phone number: 18001 0151 706 2829

NHS 111
Tel: 111

Diabetes UK
Online: <http://www.diabetes.org.uk>

North West Diabetes UK
Tel: 01925 653281
Email: n.west@diabetes.org.uk

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All Trust approved information is available on request in alternative formats, including other languages, easy read, large print, audio, Braille, moon and electronically.

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