

What is Reactive Hypoglycaemia?

Reactive Hypoglycaemia is caused by an overproduction of insulin by the pancreas.

There are several causes for reactive hypoglycaemia and your doctor can discuss these with you.

Following a meal or snack, blood glucose levels will rise as the food is digested.

To prevent them going too high the body produces insulin which usually keeps them within normal levels.

However, people with reactive hypoglycaemia may produce too much insulin and in these circumstances blood glucose levels can drop causing signs of hypoglycaemia, i.e. shaking, sweating, fatigue and/or extreme hunger.

What can you do?

Certain foods cause more rapid rises in blood glucose levels depending upon the types and quantities eaten and the timing of meals and snacks.

Therefore, dietary treatment is the cornerstone of treatment for reactive hypoglycaemia.

The main points are to eat little and often (from six times a day, up to 10 times), to include slow releasing carbohydrate at each meal and snack, to ensure you follow a healthy diet and to minimise the foods and drinks which may cause a reaction. Your dietitian can help you with this.

Example Meal Plan

Breakfast
Porridge made with semi or skimmed milk or Two rounds of toast (granary bread) with low fat spread
Mid-morning snack (1 or 2 depending on symptoms)
Small piece of fruit or High fibre cereal bar
Lunch
Baked beans on toast (granary bread)
Mid-afternoon snack (1-2 depending on symptoms)
Small piece of fruit or 2 Ryvitas with spread or natural yoghurt
Evening meal
Meat/chicken/fish/alternative 4oz lean cut and cooked Vegetables (1/2 plate) Potatoes/rice (basmati)/pasta/granary bread (1/4–1/3 plate) Sugar free jelly with 1 scoop ice cream or natural yoghurt and fruit

Evening snack
Small slice fruit loaf or natural yoghurt
Supper
Oatmeal or high fibre toast and small glass of milk

Slow Release Carbohydrates

We know that carbohydrate foods release their glucose (which gives us energy) at different rates.

It can help to control your blood glucose levels if you try foods that are slow release.

Medium/Fast Release Foods— limit these	Slow Release Foods – better options
Rice Crispies	Porridge
White Bread	Granary Bread
Full sugar pop/squash	Diet pop/no added sugar squash
White Rice	Basmati rice
Water biscuits	Oatmeal biscuits
Pumpkin/parsnips	Beans/lentils/pulses
Baked potato	New potato
Pretzels	Popcorn
Brown rice pasta	White spaghetti
Ice cream	Custard
Cous Cous	Noodles
Doughnut	Fruit loaf

It is advised that you eat little and often to keep your blood glucose levels stable. This means having smaller meals and having regular small snacks.

The amount of carbohydrate will also affect the blood glucose levels. If you are eating more frequently it is important that you don't gain weight, so smaller meals and frequent low kcal snacks are advisable.

Use small plates for meals, ensuring ½ plate of vegetables or salad, ¼ plate of protein and ¼ plate of slow release carbohydrate.

Snacks should be high fibre if possible and low in overall carbohydrate. When checking your label check carbohydrates and not sugars.

Ideally, choose snacks which have less than 15grams of total carbohydrate.

Suitable snacks

It is important to choose healthy snacks to avoid weight gain.

Below is a list of suitable snacks:

- 1 small handful of fruit
- High fibre cereal bar (4-5gms carbohydrate per bar)
- Wholegrain biscuit e.g. digestive
- 1 Slice of granary toast
- Small handful of peanuts
- 1-2 oatmeal cookies
- Natural yoghurt
- 1/3 pint milk
- ½ inch slice fruit loaf
- 1 Weetabix/Wheat bisk with milk



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