

Blood Glucose and Driving:

- * If you inject insulin, check your blood glucose no longer than 2 hours before driving and then every 2 hours on long journeys. You may need to check your blood glucose if you take tablets that may cause hypos (sulfonylureas or glinides). Your doctor or nurse can give advice on how frequently to monitor. Group 2 drivers (bus/lorry) on a sulfonylurea or glinide are required by law to monitor their blood glucose level at least twice daily and at times relevant to driving.
- * If you have a hypo wait 45 minutes after your blood glucose level returns to normal (above 5mmol/L) before driving. **DO NOT DRIVE IF BLOOD GLUCOSE IS LESS THAN 5MMOL/L**
- * If you have a hypo when driving you must stop the vehicle as soon as it is safe to do so, remove keys from the ignition, move to the passenger seat (if possible) and treat the hypo.

Remember:

- * Always carry fast acting carbohydrate. Keep hypo treatment beside the bed, in your car, handbag or jacket pocket for emergencies.
- * Take fast acting carbohydrate as soon as you feel hypo or if your blood glucose level is less than 4mmol/L.
- * Tell relatives, friends and work-mates about hypos and how to treat them. Always carry identification that says you have diabetes.
- * If your food or activity level is going to be different from normal plan ahead.
- * Contact your nurse or doctor if you have regular or unexplained hypos or are losing your hypo symptoms.

Adapted from the NI Diabetes Dietitians
Hypoglycaemia leaflet



Hypoglycaemia

Information for Patients

Patient Name: _____

Patient H&C Number: _____

Your Diabetes Contact
Details are:

Nurse: _____

Hospital Clinic: _____

GP: _____



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Health and Social Care Northern Ireland

Hypoglycaemia (‘hypo’)

A hypo is when your blood glucose level falls too low - **less than 4 mmol/L**.

Early signs and symptoms include:

- * Shaking
- * Sweating
- * Intense hunger
- * Poor concentration
- * Paleness
- * Headaches
- * Tingling lips / mouth
- * Rapid heart beat
- * Slurred speech
- * Irritable
- * Mood changes

Late signs and symptoms include:

- * Confusion
- * Drowsiness
- * Double vision
- * Odd behaviour
- * Speech difficulty
- * Lack of co-ordination
- * Coma

Hypo Unawareness

Sometimes people with diabetes lose their hypo warning signs, they become unable to notice when blood glucose is <4mmol/l. If this happens speak to your diabetic specialist nurse — s/he may be able to help you regain these warning signs.

A hypo is most likely to occur if you:

1. Eat less carbohydrate food than usual for example bread, potatoes, pasta, rice, cereal.
2. Miss or delay a meal or snack.
3. Are more active than normal.
4. Take too much insulin or too large a dose of some diabetes tablets.
5. Take your insulin or diabetes tablets at the wrong time.
6. Take too much alcohol or take alcohol on an empty stomach. Alcohol can cause hypos for up to 16 hours.
7. Are in a hot environment, e.g. on holiday, hot bath.

How to treat a hypo

If you are conscious, treat the hypo immediately and rest until symptoms resolve.

Step 1: Take 15 to 20g of fast acting carbohydrate

15 to 20g of fast acting carbohydrate is provided by:

- * 170 to 225ml Lucozade® (**new formulation April 2017**)
- * 225 to 300ml Lucozade® Sport
- * 150 to 200ml pure fruit juice
- * 150 to 200ml ordinary cola
- * 5 to 6 glucose tablets e.g. Dextro energy®, Lucozade®

- * 4 to 5 Glucotabs®
- * 60ml bottle of Glucojuice®
- * 4 to 5 soft sweets e.g. wine gums, jelly babies
- * 1½ to 2 tubes of glucose 40% gel (brands include Glucogel® and Rapilose®)

Note: glucose 40% gel is available on prescription (if clinically appropriate). The other items listed above should be purchased by patients.

If your blood glucose is still below 4mmol/L after 15 minutes, take a further 15 to 20g of fast acting carbohydrate.

Foods containing fat, like milk or chocolate, are not recommended as they take longer to raise your blood glucose level.

Step 2: Take 15 to 20g of slower acting carbohydrate if your next meal or snack is not due within 30 minutes.

For example a slice of bread, 2 plain biscuits, a glass of milk and 1 biscuit or a yoghurt and a piece of fruit.

If you have a severe hypo and become unconscious you will need help from someone to treat the hypo.

An injection of the hormone glucagon can be given to raise blood glucose levels and restore consciousness. This is only if an injection is available and the person giving the injection knows how to use it.

They should dial 999 to request an ambulance if:

- a glucagon injection kit isn't available
- there's nobody trained to give the injection
- the injection is ineffective after 10 minutes

Make sure your family and friends are aware that they mustn't give you anything by mouth if you are unconscious or unable to swallow.