HYPO TREATMENT

Hypoglycaemia is when your blood glucose drops to below 3.5mmol/l, with or without symptoms. If you take insulin or certain diabetes tablets, you are at risk of having a hypo. At blood glucose levels below 3.5mmol/l, the brain is not getting enough glucose to function properly.

Symptoms you may experience when having a hypo:

**Mild**
- Tingling
- Feeling hot & sweaty
- Light headed
- Blurred vision
- Hunger
- Dizziness

**Moderate**
- Fast pulse or palpitations
- Trembling or shakiness
- Anxiety or irritability

You will get to know what a hypo feels like for you and should never ignore it. It is common for people who have had diabetes for a long time to become less aware or have no symptoms of a hypo. This is why regular testing of your blood glucose is extremely important.

Common reasons a hypo may occur:

- Taking too much insulin
- Not having regular meals or missing meals
- Not eating enough carbohydrate, or overestimating the amount you’ve eaten
- Stress
- Too much alcohol or drinking alcohol without food
- Recreational Drugs
- Hot weather
- Physical activity, particularly unplanned or unexpected additional activity
STEP 1:
It is important to treat the hypo as soon as you notice the symptoms (or, if you don’t have symptoms, as soon as you record a blood glucose level of below 3.5mmol/l) by taking rapid-acting carbohydrate. This will give a quick rise in blood glucose within 5-10 minutes. The amount of carbohydrate needed is 15-20g and the examples below each contain 15-20g of rapid-acting carbohydrate suitable for treating a hypo.

Examples of rapid-acting carbohydrates containing 15-20g of carbohydrate
If you are at risk of experiencing hypos, it is vital that you carry rapid-acting hypo treatments (such as the examples below) with you at all times.

- **Lucozade Energy**
  - 15g Carbs
  - 170ml
  - 63 Cals

- **Cola**
  - 16g Carbs
  - 150ml
  - 62 Cals

- **Orange Juice**
  - 23g Carbs
  - 284ml, half pint
  - 94 Cals

- **Jelly Babies**
  - 20g Carbs
  - 25g
  - 84 Cals

- **Jelly Beans**
  - 20g Carbs
  - 22g
  - 80 Cals

- **Cola Bottles**
  - 20g Carbs
  - 27g
  - 88 Cals
STEP 2:
After taking the rapid-acting carbohydrate, **sit down for 10-15 minutes**.
If you are able, re-check your blood glucose levels to ensure it’s over 3.5mmol/l.
If not, eat more rapid-acting carbohydrate and wait a further 5-10 minutes.

STEP 3:
If your next meal is due in the next hour, you do not need to take any further carbohydrate. If it will be more than 1 hour until your next meal, to avoid the risk of becoming hypo again, you should consider having some slower-acting carbohydrate.

**Examples of slower-acting carbohydrates**

Slower-acting carbs are not recommended as the first-line treatment for a hypo. These foods cause the blood glucose to rise much more slowly and therefore are not suitable for treating a hypo.

- **Sliced Bread** (granary)  
  - Carbs: 15g  
  - Calories: 33g, medium  
  - Calories: 78

- **Banana** (with skin)  
  - Carbs: 17g  
  - Calories: 130ml  
  - Calories: 69

- **Mango**  
  - Carbs: 11g  
  - Calories: 80g  
  - Calories: 46

- **Chocolate Honeycomb Balls**  
  - Carbs: 23g  
  - Calories: 37g  
  - Calories: 176

- **Chocolate Oat Biscuit**  
  - Carbs: 12g  
  - Calories: 19g  
  - Calories: 93

- **Milk** (semi-skimmed)  
  - Carbs: 13g  
  - Calories: 284ml, half pint  
  - Calories: 131

If you are experiencing hypos regularly or they are severe and you need the assistance of another person in treating your hypos, you should arrange a review with your diabetes care team or doctor.