










Patient Information Leaflet on Hypoglycemia (Low Blood Sugar)

HYPOGLYCEMIA occurs when your blood sugar level falls below 4.0 mmol/L (70 mg/dl). You may or may not have typical symptoms.

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS?

 Hunger	 Shaking
 Sweating	 Fast heart beat
 Impaired vision	 Dizziness
 Headache	 Irritability
 Weakness	Fits Confusion Drowsiness

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Hypoglycemia can be dangerous if left untreated. Loss of consciousness may occur. **If the person is unconscious, call an ambulance immediately. Do not give the person any food or drink.**

WHAT TO DO IF YOU SUSPECT YOU HAVE HYPOGLYCEMIA?

<p>STEP 1: CHECK</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confirm that your blood sugar level is less than 4 mmol/L. • If you do not have a blood glucose meter, skip to step 2.
<p>STEP 2: TREAT</p> 	<p>Take 15g of quick-acting carbohydrate/sugar to raise your blood sugar level quickly. E.g.:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 tablespoon (or 3 teaspoons) of sugar or • ½ packet (125ml) of sweetened drink (not the “less sweet” variety) or • ½ can of regular (non-diet) soft drink or • 4 to 7 soft sweets (not sugar-free) or • 3 glucose tablets. <p>Be prepared; always carry these quick-acting carbohydrates/sugar with you.</p> <p>Avoid taking food that is high in fat such as chocolate bars. Fat slows down the movement of sugar into your blood.</p>
<p>STEP 3: RECHECK</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recheck your blood sugar level 15 minutes later. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ If blood sugar level is still below 4 mmol/L, repeat Step 2. • When blood sugar is above 4 mmol/L, take a slow-acting carbohydrate. E.g.: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Your next meal or ○ 1 slice of bread or ○ 3 pieces of plain crackers or ○ 1 cup of low fat milk (250ml). <p>Record all blood sugar readings and events for your healthcare team to note. Always look for the cause or trigger for the hypoglycaemia.</p>

HOW TO PREVENT HYPOGLYCEMIA?

COMMON CAUSES	HOW TO PREVENT
<p>Delayed meal or skipping a meal.</p>	<p>Do not delay or skip your meals and discuss with your healthcare team before starting on a fast for religious purposes.</p>
<p>Too little “starchy” carbohydrate food in the meal.</p>	<p>Eat a suitable amount of carbohydrate food at regular meal times.</p> <p>If your appetite is poor ($\leq \frac{1}{2}$ share), supplement your diet with diabetic nutritional supplements such as Glucerna, Isocal or Nutren. You may need to consult your healthcare team regarding a change in the dosage of medications.</p>
<p>Drinking alcohol on an empty stomach</p>	<p>Limit the intake of alcohol. Do not drink alcohol without eating food.</p>
<p>Too much insulin/diabetes medication.</p>	<p>Inject the correct amount of insulin and take the correct dose of diabetes medications at the right time every day.</p>
<p>Mismatch between insulin/diabetes medication and meal times.</p>	<p>If your blood sugar level is often low, you may need to consult your healthcare team regarding a change in your diabetes medication/insulin dose.</p>
<p>Being more active than usual.</p>	<p>Be sensible about exercise. Take a snack before strenuous activities. You may need to consult your doctor about lowering your dose of diabetes medication before planned exercise.</p>
<p>Having a poor appetite from being sick with an infection, such as flu, food poisoning, urinary tract infection.</p>	<p>Get your blood sugar checked as it may be low or even high during an infection. Take a nutritional supplement if you are eating less than half a meal and your blood sugar is not high. See your doctor early.</p>