

Hypoglycemia (Low Blood Glucose Levels)

Hypoglycemia is a condition which occurs if you have too little sugar in your bloodstream.

Hypoglycemia can quickly become dangerous, particularly for insulin users, so hypoglycemia should be treated immediately.



What are the symptoms of hypoglycemia?

- Sweating
- Feeling dizzy
- Being tired or yawning
- Having anxiety or irritability
- A pale appearance, particularly in the lips
- Feeling very hungry
- Trembling or shaking

If blood sugar levels drop **very low**, the following signs may appear:

- Having difficulty concentrating
- Becoming confused or behaving irrationally
- Convulsions
- Unconsciousness

What causes hypoglycemia?

Hypoglycemia may be caused by:

- Too little carbohydrate for the amount of medication taken
- Exercise, as this can increase the intensity of insulin
- Alcohol can lead to lower blood sugar levels than normal particularly if alcohol is taken on an empty stomach



Treating hypoglycemia

The immediate treatment for hypoglycemia is to eat a source of sugary food such as sweets, glucose tablets or a sugary drink.

The NHS advise taking **10 to 15 grams of carbohydrate** to raise blood glucose levels back to normal.

If a meal is not due, have some more slowly absorbed carbohydrate, such as bread, fruit or milk, as well.

Take a blood test 15 minutes after treating the hypo to check whether blood glucose levels have raised to normal levels.

Treating severe hypoglycemia

If someone is unconscious because of hypoglycemia, it is important not to give them food or drink as this could cause choking.

Instead, put the person into the recovery position and either administer glucagon or call 999 for an ambulance.

Glucagon is a hormone which works in the opposite way to insulin and therefore helps to raise blood sugar levels. If you are not sure how to give a glucagon injection, call for an ambulance.

Preventing hypoglycemia

You can help to prevent hypoglycemia by regular testing of blood glucose which will enable you to spot patterns of when you are going too low.

Having snacks before and after exercise and after drinking alcohol can help to avoid hypos.

Counting carbohydrate content of meals is very helpful for people injecting insulin. You can ask your doctor to be assigned on to a carbohydrate counting course.



Seeking professional advice

Contact your healthcare team if you are experiencing several episodes of hypoglycemia each week. Your health team can help to suggest changes to your medication regime.

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Is there anything that can help me with hypoglycemia?

Blood glucose meters can be used to test your blood sugar levels and fast-acting carbohydrate products are available.

The HypoWallet and GlucoTabs are the 2 best selling products in the Glucose Tablets and Treatments of the Diabetes Shop.

You may wish to consider:



[HypoWallet](#)

£5.99



[GlucoTabs \(Orange\)](#)

£0.79



[GlucoGel \(80g\)](#)

£12.31