

Hypoglycaemia

What is Hypoglycaemia

Hypoglycaemia (or a 'hypo', as it is usually known) means a low blood glucose level (BGL). Hypos occur when the BGL is less than 3.5 mmol/L, or when there are symptoms of a 'hypo' at a level close to this.

What Causes Hypos

Hypos can be caused by:

- not enough, or missed carbohydrate, at meals or snacks (for the dose of insulin taken)
- exercising without eating extra carbohydrate, or exercising without reducing your insulin dose
- having too much insulin for the amount of food eaten
- having too much insulin either accidentally or if the dose needs changing
- being sick and not being able to eat or if your unable to keep food down because of vomiting.

How do you feel?

How you feel and behave when you are 'hypo' is different for everyone. Some of the things you may commonly experience or feel are listed below:

shakiness	blurred vision	nausea
headaches	pale skin	abdominal pain
dizziness	irritability	inability to concentrate
sweatiness	hunger	aggression

How to treat Hypos

If you can, it is a good idea to do a BGL if you think you are hypo. If your BGL is less than 3.5 mmol/L, or if you feel symptomatic, take one exchange of quick-acting carbohydrate (glucose) immediately.

After you have treated your hypo, wait about 20 minutes for the carbohydrate to work, and then repeat the BGL test. If the BGL is still less than 3.5 mmol/L, then give another exchange of quick-acting carbohydrate. Re-check in 20 minutes and treat again if necessary (until your BGL rises above 4 mmol/L).

If the hypo has occurred near a snack or meal time, treat the hypo to raise your BGL and have your usual meal or snack.

If the hypo has occurred with **exercise**, then follow up the hypo treatment with an exchange of longer acting carbohydrate, such as a piece of fruit, biscuit, milk or muesli bar.

Examples of one exchange of quick- acting carbohydrate

Glucose tablets equivalent to 15 g carbohydrate
Fruit Juice - 120 mLs
Lucozade® - 100 mLs
Ordinary soft drink - 100 to 150 mLs
Glucose & Honey mixture (Coles Home brand) - 2 to 4 teaspoons

Examples of one exchange of long acting carbohydrate

250 mLs of milk
1 banana
1 muesli bar
6 Jatz® biscuits

If you have a hypo in the middle of the night, treat it in the usual way. Take one exchange of quick-acting carbohydrate (glucose) immediately and wait for about 20 minutes and then repeat the BGL test. If the BGL is still less than 3.5 - 4 mmol/L, then give another exchange of quick-acting carbohydrate. Re-check in 20 minutes and treat again if necessary, until your BGL rises above 4 mmol/L).

Tips for treating Hypos

- **Always** carry some hypo food with you
- Carbohydrates high in fat, such as chocolate, are not good for treating hypos as they work too slowly.

For more information on hypos, go to:

<http://www.diabetesaustralia.com.au/Understanding-Diabetes/What-is-Diabetes/Hypoglycaemia/>

http://www.workingwonders.com.au/rchsubsites/Diabetes26042005/html/m_05.htm