



## How Can I Treat Hypoglycaemia

### Mild hypo

If you become aware of any early warning signs then stop what you are doing and treat your hypo quickly by following these steps.

#### Step 1

Take 15–20 g rapid-acting carbohydrate, for example:

- four or five jelly babies
- 200 ml orange juice
- four to six glucose tablets

#### Step 2

Check your blood glucose again in 10 minutes. If it is greater than 4 mmol/L then proceed to Step 3. If it is 4 mmol/L or less then repeat Step 1.

#### Step 3

To prevent a further drop in your blood glucose, once your blood glucose is above 4 mmol/L after treatment with rapid-acting carbohydrate you should take some medium-acting carbohydrate-, for example in the form of ONE of these:

- a biscuit
- a slice of toast
- a piece of fruit
- a glass of milk
- your next meal

### Moderate hypo

If you are confused, you may need help from someone else to treat your hypo. If you are conscious, responsive and able to swallow without the risk of choking, your helper should follow the same steps as above, or should treat you with Glucogel.

Glucogel is a tube of gel that raises blood glucose levels quickly. It can be prescribed by your GP or it can be purchased over the counter. Each tube of Glucogel contains 10 g of carbohydrate and so you will need two tubes to treat a hypo.

Glucogel should only be used if the person being treated can swallow. It is vitally important that Glucogel is not given to an unconscious person because of the risk of choking.

A friend, relative or carer should be taught how to use Glucogel as follows:

- Make sure that the person being treated can swallow
- Twist off the cap of the Glucogel tube



- Squeeze the tube to insert the gel into the person's mouth between their teeth and their cheek
- Rub the outside of their cheek gently to allow the Glucogel to absorb. It is absorbed through the lining of the mouth and should help raise the blood glucose within 15 minutes

You should follow this treatment with a starchy carbohydrate snack such as a biscuit, a slice of toast or your next meal if it is due. You should then check your blood glucose level again. The treatment can be repeated if necessary.

## Severe hypo

If you are unconscious or unresponsive because of hypoglycaemia, this is an emergency situation. You will need immediate attention from another person and/or a healthcare professional. Usually in this situation, your blood glucose will be very low (less than 1–2 mmol/L).

If you are unconscious, someone may need to give you glucagon.

## Treating hypoglycaemia with glucagon

Glucagon is a hormone that occurs naturally in our bodies but it can also be produced in a lab and used as a medication. If you use insulin to manage your diabetes, you can arrange for a carer, friend or relative to be taught how to treat a severe hypo by giving you an injection of glucagon.

It is branded as GlucaGen Hypo Kit and available on prescription. It raises the blood glucose level by releasing glucose that is stored in the liver.

The person treating you with glucagon should be taught the following step-by-step guide to treating you with glucagon:

- Place the person in the recovery position
- Follow the instruction leaflet that comes with the glucagon and inject the person into a fleshy part of their body, e.g. their thigh
- Allow around 10–15 minutes for the glucagon to work
- If the person has not begun to regain consciousness in that time, or if they are showing signs of having a seizure (shaking and/or jerking violently) then call 999 immediately as they may need to have an injection of glucose
- If the person is regaining consciousness, then check their blood glucose level again in 10 minutes
- Once the person is fully conscious and able to swallow, give them a snack of starchy carbohydrate, e.g. a sandwich or slice of toast
- Continue to monitor their blood glucose level regularly until it is back to within a normal range



Glucagon may not work if the stores of glucose in your liver are low. This may be the case if you have been drinking a lot of alcohol, if you have eaten very little food or if you had a hypo the previous day.

If you have had any type of hypo, whether mild or severe, always think about what caused it. You can discuss it with your diabetes care team to help reduce the risk of it happening again.

