

Hypoglycaemia

Or “Hypo” means that your blood sugar is LOW. For practical purposes this is usually accepted to mean a blood glucose level of below 3.5mmol/l. The most common causes of hypos are:

- Missing or being late for a meal
- More exercise than usual
- Alcohol
- Too much insulin

A hypo can happen quickly – within minutes. If you are hypo you may experience some of the following symptoms.

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| ■ Sweating | ■ Irritability |
| ■ Trembling | ■ Confusion |
| ■ Dizziness | ■ Heart pounding |
| ■ Tiredness | ■ Headache |
| ■ Sudden hunger | ■ Paleness |

You will soon be able to recognise the early warning signals and so be able to take the right action.

What to do

Stop what you are doing, sit down and take something sweet to eat or drink, such as one of the following:

- 50mls of energy drink, e.g. Lucozade or cola
- Glucose tablets (wash down with water)
- 2 teaspoons of sugar, jam or honey

These will bring your blood glucose level up quickly, but will not keep it there for long. It is important to follow this quick relief measure with a starchy food such as a slice of bread, bowl of cereal or some plain biscuits.

Your symptoms should disappear within a few minutes, if not, take one of the quick relief measures again. Coma or lack of consciousness is rare, if this does happen you will need an injection of glucagon which will restore your blood glucose level to normal within minutes.

Learn to recognise and respond to your own symptoms and to anticipate when you may need more energy, e.g. exercise. For more information on the effects of exercise see “Diabetes and exercise”, or consult your doctor or nurse.

Hyperglycaemia

Or “Hyper” means your blood glucose level is HIGH and may be caused by any of the following:

- Eating too much or the wrong food
- An infection or illness
- Not enough insulin for requirements
- Little or no exercise

Hypers can develop over hours or even days. If you allow your blood sugar to stay high you may feel signs and symptoms such as:

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| ■ Increased thirst | ■ Blurred vision |
| ■ Passing lots of urine | ■ Dry, itchy skin |
| ■ Feeling and being sick | ■ Headaches |
| ■ Tiredness | ■ Aching limbs |

If your blood glucose level is consistently 10mmol/l or more talk to your doctor or nurse. You may need to adjust your dose of insulin or your diet.

Over a period of years, raised blood glucose levels can lead to complications.

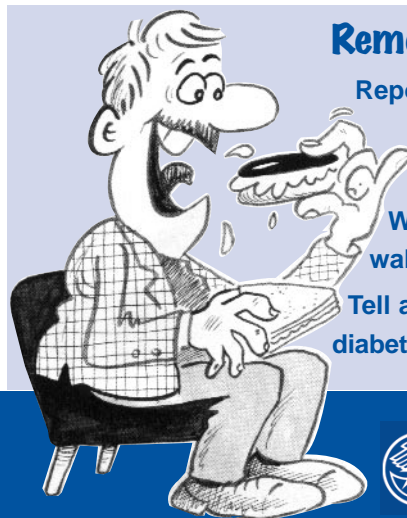
What to do

Test your blood glucose frequently and if you take insulin adjust this accordingly. Remember that sticky fingers can give a falsely high reading – always wash your hands first.

Check your urine for ketones – if there is more than just a trace of ketones and you feel unwell, contact your doctor immediately. Being sick is a clear danger sign.

If a hyper is left untreated unconsciousness or diabetic coma will follow.

Drink fluids without sugar if possible.



Remember

Report any hypos to your doctor or nurse as they may need to alter your treatment. Try to work out why you were hypoglycaemic.

Carry glucose tablets or some form of sugar with you at all times.

Wear an identification bracelet or carry an identification card in your purse or wallet.

Tell a work colleague, travelling companion, friend or teacher that you have diabetes and tell them how they can help you if your blood sugar becomes too low.

If you are ill

During illness it is important **not** to stop taking your insulin injections or tablets. You should seek advice from your doctor or nurse.

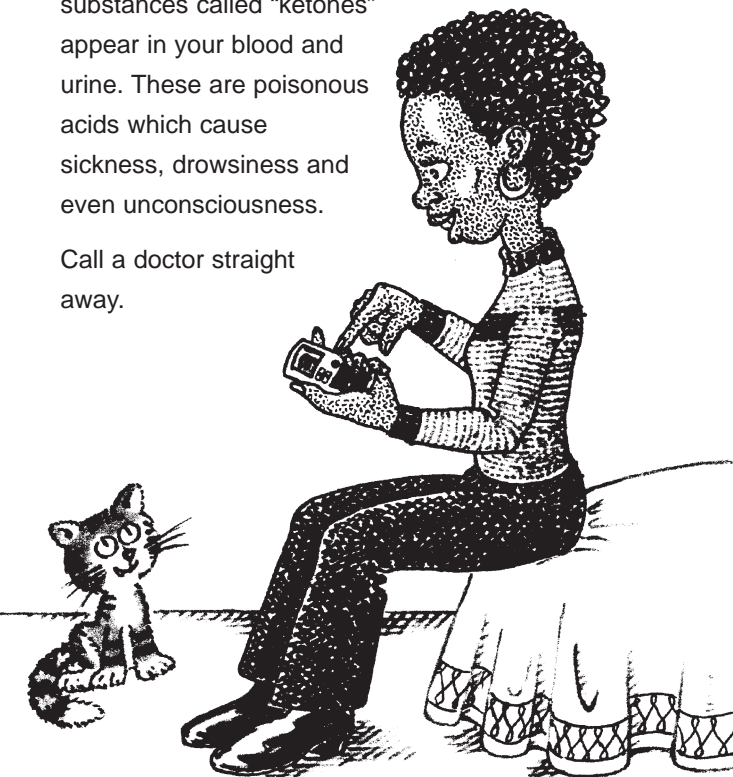
Illness in diabetes may cause your blood glucose levels to rise as the infection works against the action of insulin. It is therefore important to test your blood glucose levels frequently.

If you do not feel like eating much you may find it easier to take food in liquid form, e.g. soup, milk or fruit juice.

Ketoacidosis

If your blood glucose levels continue to rise, substances called "ketones" appear in your blood and urine. These are poisonous acids which cause sickness, drowsiness and even unconsciousness.

Call a doctor straight away.



Leaflets available from Hypoguard

- 1 What is non insulin dependent diabetes
- 2 What is insulin dependent diabetes
- 3 Long-term complications of diabetes
- 4 Hypos, hypens and all that
- 5 Monitoring diabetes
- 6 Diabetes and exercise
- 7 Work and driving with diabetes
- 8 Smoking and alcohol with diabetes
- 9 On holiday with diabetes
- 10 Men and Women with diabetes

Please call the **Hypoguard Freephone Information Line: 0800 371 957** for further copies of this leaflet or other leaflets in the series.

Diabetes management made simple

Hypoguard have a range of blood glucose monitoring systems specifically designed to help people with diabetes manage their glucose levels in their homes. If you would like any information about them, please call the Hypoguard Freephone Information Line: **0800 371 957** 8am and 6pm, Monday to Friday or visit our web site at www.hypoguard.com

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