

AN INFORMATION SHEET FOR SUPPORT PERSONS:

Type 1 diabetes in children and adolescents

what is hypoglycaemia?

Hypoglycaemia (low blood glucose level or hypo) occurs when the blood glucose level drops to less than 4mmol/L or when hypo symptoms are being experienced at a level close to 4mmol/L.

What causes a hypo?

- Being physically active
- Delaying or missing meals or snacks
- Not eating enough carbohydrate
- Having too much insulin

What are the symptoms of a hypo?

- A headache
- Trembling
- Looking pale
- Feeling hungry
- Sweating
- Crying
- Being irritable
- Feeling or acting confused

Treatment

Mild to moderate hypo

If the young person is conscious and has a blood glucose level less than 4 mmol/L, take the following steps.

Step 1

Give any one of the following. You may need to coax the young person to take it:

- 1/3–1/2 can soft drink (not Diet)
- 2–3 teaspoons honey or sugar
- Glucose tablets equivalent to 10–15 grams
- 5–7 jellybeans
- 1/3–1/2 glass fruit juice or a small tetrapak

Symptoms usually disappear after 10–15 minutes. However, if the blood glucose level remains low and symptoms are still present, repeat the treatment and stay with the young person.

Continued over...

If in doubt, do not waste time doing a blood glucose test. Blood glucose levels less than 4 mmol/L should be treated even when there are no symptoms.



what is hypoglycaemia?

Step 2

Follow up with extra carbohydrate food such as fruit, a sandwich or biscuits. If a hypo occurs just before a scheduled meal or snack, follow with that meal or snack.

Severe hypo

If the young person has a fit or is unconscious, get **emergency help fast!**

- **Do not attempt to give anything by mouth.**
- **Lie the young person on their side in the recovery/coma position.**
- **Call the ambulance (dial 000) OR give an injection of Glucagon* if it is available and you are trained to give it.**
- **Stay with the young person until help arrives.**

* Glucagon is a hormone that raises the blood glucose level and is injected in a similar way to insulin. It is recommended to have Glucagon on hand in case of a severe hypo and be shown how to use it.

References: *Caring for Diabetes in Children and Adolescents – A Parent's Manual*, Combined Children's Services of NSW, editors G Ambler, V Barron, C May and E Ambler; *School Pack*, International Diabetes Federation and Diabetes Australia.

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