

A Fact Sheet for Parents and Carers

What is Hypoglycaemia?

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

What causes a hypo?

Being physically active

Delaying or missing a meal or snack

Not eating enough carbohydrate

Having too much insulin

Symptoms of a hypo

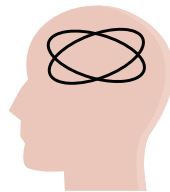
These can include:



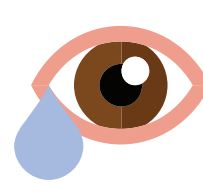
Headache



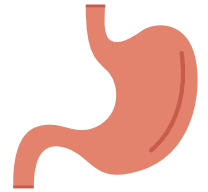
Sweating



Being irritable



Crying



Feeling hungry

Looking pale

Feeling or acting confused

Trembling

If in doubt, treat the hypo, then do a blood glucose test.

A BGL less than 4mmol/L should be treated even when there are no symptoms

Treatment

MILD TO MODERATE HYPO

If the child is conscious and their BGL is 4mmol/L or less take the following steps:

STEP 1

Give any one of the following. You may need to encourage the child to eat or drink



1/2 glass fruit juice



1/2 can soft drink (not diet)



1 Glucose gel



2-3 teaspoons sugar or honey



5-7 Jelly Beans

STEP 2

Follow up with some slow release carbohydrate food such as fruit, a sandwich or biscuits. This will help stabilise blood glucose levels. If a hypo occurs just before a scheduled meal or snack, follow hypo treatment with that meal or snack instead.

If your child uses an insulin pump, Lantus or Levemir, they may not need step 2.

Symptoms usually disappear after 10-15 minutes. However, if the BGL remains low and symptoms are still present, repeat step 1 and stay with the child.

Severe hypo

If the child has a fit or is unconscious, get emergency help fast!

- Do not attempt to give anything by mouth
- Lie the child on their side in the coma or recovery position, keep their airway clear
- Call the ambulance(000) and say in English (if able to) it is a "diabetes emergency" (they will use an interpreter service if there is any difficulty) or if it is available and you are trained to give it, give a Glucagon* injection
- Stay with the child until help arrives

*Glucagon is a hormone that raises the BGL and is injected into the big muscle at the top front of the leg.

Remember that a hypo can occur up to 16 hours after exercise. You can reduce the risk of a delayed hypo by extra blood glucose testing, giving the child extra carbohydrates and/or adjusting the insulin dose.

**For more information contact
Diabetes NSW & ACT on 1300 342 238 or visit as1diabetes.com.au**

Need an interpreter?

A free telephone interpreter service is available for people who may have difficulty in understanding or speaking English. The Telephone Interpreting Service (TIS) is provided by the government and has access to professional interpreters in almost 2000 languages and dialects and can respond immediately to most requests.

Accessing an interpreter:

1. Simply dial 131 450 for the Telephone Interpreting Service.
2. Explain the purpose for the call e.g. wanting to speak to the National Diabetes Services Scheme helpline
3. The operator will connect you to an interpreter in the required language to an NDSS helpline representative for a three-way conversation.

This free service has been set up by Diabetes Australia and will be promoted with assistance from the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing.