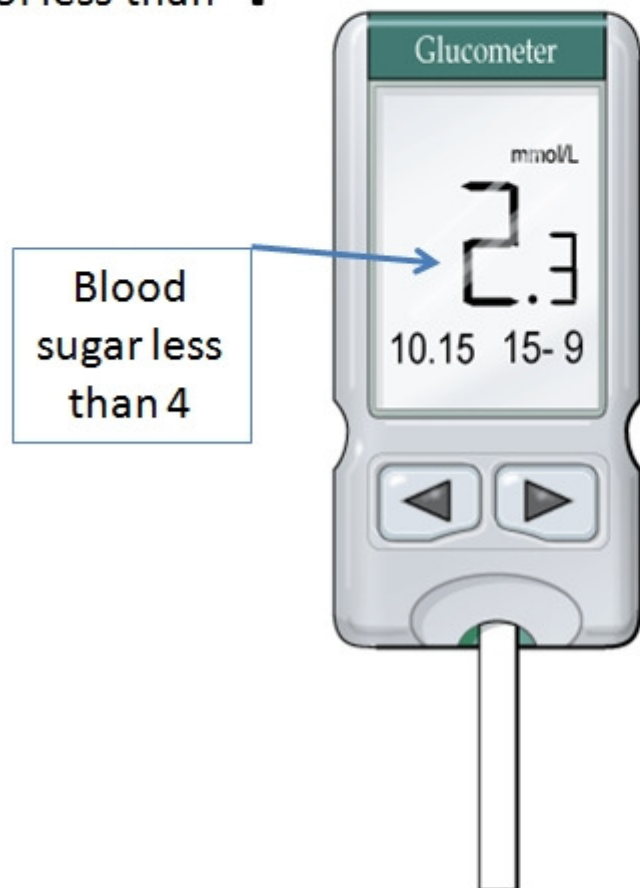


Signs & symptoms Hypos – low blood sugar

1 A ***hypo** is when you have a blood sugar level

of less than **4**



2 When you have a hypo you can feel unwell.



3 The lower your blood sugar goes the worse you will feel.

It is hard to give a number when you will have a problem but you will know when you start to get symptoms and a blood sugar level of less than **4**



***hypo** is short for hypoglycaemia (low blood sugar)

Signs & symptoms Hypos – low blood sugar

Signs



Headache,
sweating,
feeling
warm



Shaky

"pins and
needles"
Numb
tongue & lips



Shaky



Anxious
nervous



Heart
seems to
pump hard



Pale,
cold,
clammy

Sick
hungry



Large pupils



Blurred eyesight

Why does a low blood sugar cause so many problems?

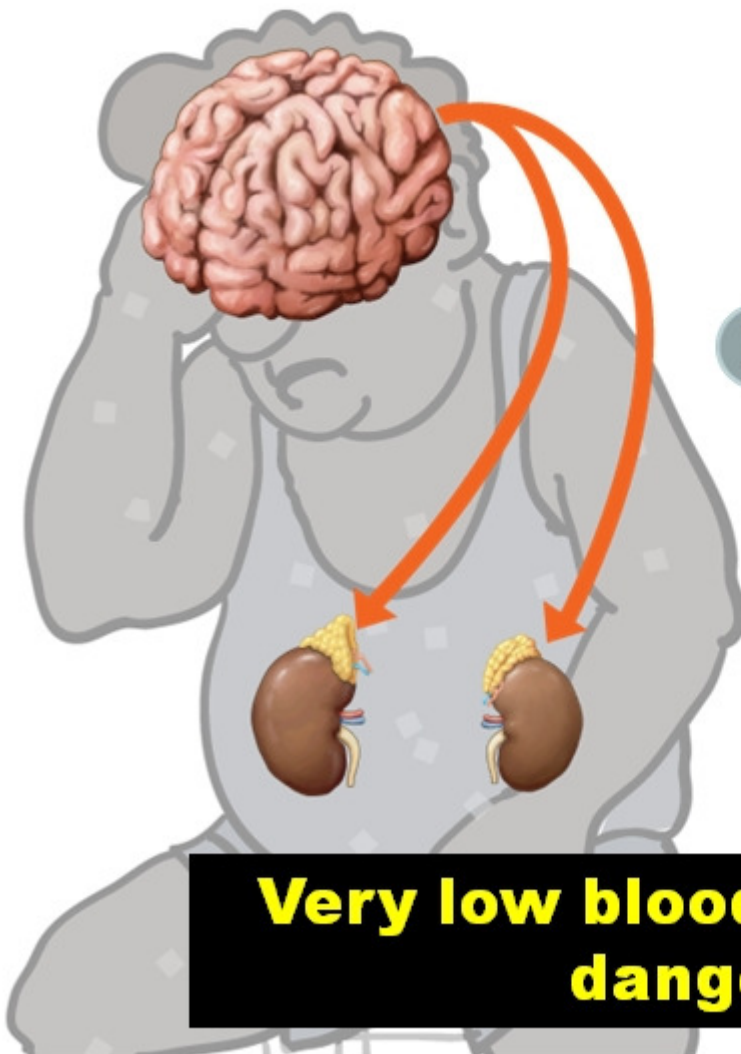
- 1 Your brain and nerves need sugar to work.

Not enough sugar will cause the brain to stop working properly and this will cause the signs & symptoms like being anxious and nervous.



- 2 When you have a hypo your brain sends messages to your adrenal glands which put a *chemical into your blood.

This causes the signs & symptoms like making you heart beat faster



Very low blood sugar can be dangerous

* The chemical is called either adrenaline or ephedrine



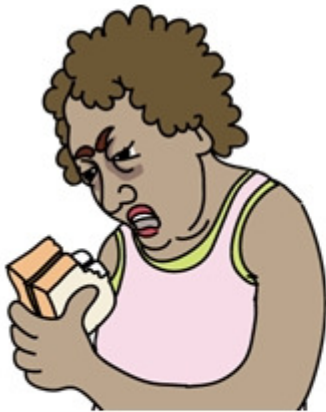
When can I get a hypo?

If you have diabetes and:

- 1** You are having insulin injections or are taking a diabetes medicine containing sulfonylurea



- 2** You haven't eaten for a long time.



- 3** You have type 1 diabetes and drink too much alcohol on an empty stomach or when your blood sugar is low.



- 4** You have type 1 diabetes and do hard exercise when you haven't eaten or your blood sugar is low.

What do I do if I have a hypo?

1

Take: 3 glucose tablet (5gm)



Or 6-7 jelly beans



Or 3 teaspoons of sugar



Or drink half a can a sugar drink. (Not an energy or sports drink)



Or drink half a glass of fruit juice

Or 3 teaspoons of honey



2

You will then need something to eat.

3

If your hypo is really bad you will get an injection of glucagon which will make your liver put sugar into your blood.



- 1 Warning:** if you are unable to treat yourself, someone else should not give you sugar or anything which contains sugar.

You will probably need to be given a liver sugar keys (glucagon) injection.



If you have a lot of bad hypos you must talk to your doctor or diabetes educator and work out a special plan. This plan should be explain it to your family and friends.

2 Your hypo plan

You will need a plan if :

- If you are likely to get a hypo because of the insulin or tablets you are taking.



- If you have type 1 diabetes and want to do hard exercise.



You doctor diabetes educator will work out a plan with you.

Hypos and medicine

There are 3 things you can do to help prevent a hypo

- 1** Eat right- Have smaller meals and spread them out over the day. During the day you don't want a long time between having eaten some food.



- 2** Be active. This will help your insulin to work.

If you exercise hard you may need to have some food which contains sugar before or after your exercise



- 3** Take your medicine. Make sure you are taking your medicine exactly as your doctor says. If you are having problems tell your doctor straight away.

Diabetes medicine usually has very few side effects. Not taking your medicine can cause much bigger problems than any of the side effects you may read or hear about. If you are worried go back to your doctor and talk to him/her about it.

There is no need to print the following page when printing and using this resource

Health Professional Facilitator Information

You must use your own professional judgement when using this resource

Purpose of resources:

To provide scenarios which allows you to use the blood sugar cards when educating.

Rational;

Diabetes cards provide a flexible way to have conversations about different topics

Wikipedia's list of signs and symptoms have been referenced for the cards:

Hypo

Adrenergic manifestations

Shakiness, anxiety, nervousness

Palpitations, tachycardia

Sweating, feeling of warmth (although sweat glands have muscarinic receptors, thus "adrenergic manifestations" is not entirely accurate)

Pallor, coldness, clamminess

Dilated pupils (mydriasis)

Glucagon manifestations

Hunger, borborygmus

Nausea, vomiting, abdominal discomfort

Headache

Neuroglycopenic manifestations

Abnormal thinking, impaired judgment

Nonspecific dysphoria, moodiness, depression, crying, exaggerated concerns

Feeling of numbness "pins and needles" (paresthesia)

Negativism, irritability, belligerence, combativeness, rage

Personality change, emotional lability

Fatigue, weakness, apathy, lethargy, daydreaming, sleep

Confusion, amnesia, lightheadedness or dizziness, delirium

Staring, "glassy" look, blurred vision, double vision

Flashes of light in the field of vision

Automatic behavior, also known as automatism

Difficulty speaking, slurred speech

Ataxia, incoordination, sometimes mistaken for "drunkenness"

Focal or general motor deficit, paralysis, hemiparesis

Paresthesia, headache

Stupor, coma, abnormal breathing

Generalized or focal seizures

Memory loss, amnesia

Related resources

- Signs & symptoms – Hypos – Low blood sugar
- Young female sugar cards
- Young male sugar cards
- Elderly female sugar cards
- Elderly male sugar cards

Notes:

The resource can be printed A3 or A4 size and then laminated.

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