

Managing hypoglycaemia (hypos)

Information for patients, parents and guardians

We've written this factsheet as a guide to managing hypoglycaemia (known as a hypo). A hypo is when your blood sugar drops to less than 4mmol/L.

Treating a hypo

You can treat a hypo with fast-acting carbohydrate. We recommend that you use one of these fast acting carbohydrate options to treat a hypo:

- Dextrose tablets
- Glucojuice (available to buy over the counter in pharmacies or on prescription from your GP)
- Lucozade Energy (Original flavour)
- Glucogel

All of these options contain a high percentage of glucose.

You can use fruit juice to treat a hypo, but it needs to be taken in larger amounts. This is because the sugar in fruit juice is fructose, which differs slightly from glucose.

The table below explains how much of each of these kinds of fast-acting carbohydrate you should take to treat a hypo:

Body weight (kg)	Age (if unsure of weight)	Dextrose	Glucojuice	Lucozade Energy Original *	Fruit juice	Glucogel
Below 20kg	5 years and under	2 tablets (6-8g)	30ml (7g)	80ml (7g)	80ml (10g)	1 tube (10g)
21-50kg	6 to 12 years	3 tablets (9-12g)	40ml (10g)	110ml (10g)	100ml (13g)	1 tube (10g)
51kg & over	Teenager	4 tablets (12-16g)	60ml (15g)	170ml (15g)	150ml (20g)	1.5 tubes (15g)

*Lucozade Energy Original flavour only, not Lucozade Energy Zero or reduced sugar varieties. Please note: the different flavours of Lucozade Energy contain different amounts of glucose.

Carbohydrate options to avoid

We **do not** recommend treating a hypo with foods such as chocolate, ice cream, crisps or cereal bars. This is because sugar in these foods is absorbed much more slowly and so it takes much longer to treat the hypo.

We also **do not** recommend drinks that contain caffeine such as coca cola.

After treating a hypo

Fifteen minutes after treating the hypo, you should re-test the blood sugar to make sure it is now above 4mmols/l.

If the blood sugar is still less than 4 mmol/L repeat the dose of fast acting carbohydrate (this will be the second dose) and re test the blood sugar in another 15 minutes. If after the second set of 15 minutes (total of 30 minutes after hypo first noticed) the blood sugar is still less than 4mmol/L give a third dose of fast-acting carbohydrate.

Usually, a dose of fast acting carbohydrate will be enough to treat a hypo.

However, in some situations you may need to have a small amount of starchy carbohydrate (10 to 15g), such as a small cereal bar, a glass of milk, a small banana or a slice of bread to make sure your blood sugar level remains above 4mmols.

You might need this if:

- your hypo blood sugar level was less than 2.5mmols
- you have had a hypo earlier in the day
- you are about to exercise
- you have needed to give 3 doses of fast acting carbohydrate
- you have a hypo near bedtime

Contact us

Diabetes on call team (24 hours)
Telephone: **02380 777 222**

If you need a translation of this document, an interpreter or a version in large print, Braille or on audiotape, please telephone **023 8120 4688** for help.

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