



**Wolverhampton
Diabetes Care**

Hypoglycaemia (Low Blood Sugars)

People with diabetes on insulin or certain diabetes tablets, may experience a low blood sugar level, usually called “Hypo”. This can be serious – but it is usually easily dealt with.

What is Hypoglycaemia?

A Hypo is when the blood glucose (sugar) level gets too low. When your blood sugar level falls below 4mmol/l you may experience a hypo.

What are the symptoms?

These vary and it is important to recognise your own warning signs.

You may feel anxious, irritable, dizzy, shaky, sweaty, hungry and tired or have tingling, blurred vision, headache, palpitations.

Those around you may notice that you are pale, lacking concentration, bad tempered or unable to speak properly.

If you leave Hypos untreated or if they are unrecognised they can go on to cause confusion or coma. This is considered a “serious Hypo”.

What causes Hypos?

Missing or delaying meals, eating too little, too much insulin or medication, changes in treatment, physical activity including sexual activity, alcohol consumption, hot weather and stress. Sometimes, there may be no apparent reason.

Treating Hypos

Stop what you are doing and act immediately to raise your blood glucose levels. Take something high in sugar such as 3 or more glucose tablets (e.g. Dextrosol), or a small glass of Lucozade / coke (not low calorie or diet versions), or two teaspoons of sugar, honey or jam. If you feel no better after 5 minutes, take some more. When you do start to feel better it is important to prevent your blood glucose level dropping again by having a snack such as a sandwich, a piece of toast or bowl of cereal.

Preventing Hypos

By recognising what causes Hypos, you can reduce your chances of experiencing one by planning ahead.

Test your blood glucose regularly, eat regularly, have an extra snack if exercising, keep a steady treatment pattern with your medication.

Seeking Advice and what care to expect

If you are experiencing regular Hypos or if you ever have a serious Hypo, report to your medical team who will review the problem fully and advise how to avoid it in the future by adjusting treatment, diet and or exercise. On occasion, there may be other medical problems that give you a tendency towards a Hypo and these should be tested for. It may also be important to train your family and friends in how to recognise and correct Hypo.