Who is the leaflet for? What is its aim?

This leaflet is for children between the ages of 6 to 10 years. It will help you to learn more about hypos – (low blood glucose levels)

The long word for hypo is hypoglycaemia, so you may sometimes here the diabetes team talking about this in clinic!

You can find out:
• What is a hypo?
• What makes your blood glucose level drop?
• How do you know when your blood glucose is low?
• How do you bring your blood glucose level’s back up?
• Handy Hypo Hints

What is a hypo?

A hypo is a blood glucose level that is too low. For most of you it will be a blood glucose level lower than 4mmol.

Some of you might feel low if your blood glucose level is a bit higher than this. This can happen if your blood glucose levels are running high a lot of the time, because your body gets used to these high blood glucose levels and when they come down into target range you feel hypo when you may not be!

What makes your blood glucose level drop?

• If you have too much insulin, this then moves too much sugar out of your blood, making your levels go low.
• Not eating enough food for the insulin you have had
• Not finishing all of the meal/snack you have had an injection for
• Not having a snack when you need one
• Missing a meal
• Exercise – swimming, PE, games. Or being more active by doing things like walking around the shops, helping out with the housework or gardening!

How do you know when you are low?

• There are lots of things you can feel with a low blood glucose level
• Not everyone will feel the same way.
• It is very important for you to learn how you feel when you are low.
• If you have just been told you have diabetes it is very important to do a blood glucose test if you feel strange or different in any way so that you know what your signs will be.
• Remember! It is very important to test if you feel low as your body can sometimes get confused with high and low blood glucose levels.

Mild Warning Signs

- Sweaty
- Shaky
- Pale

Moderate Warning Signs

- Moody
- Aggressive

Severe Warning Signs

- Unconscious/passing out/Fainting
  (This is very rare)
How do you bring your blood glucose levels back up?

To fix a low blood glucose level you need to eat or drink something with fast-acting sugar in it to boost your blood glucose level back up again!

Please see the hypo treatment flowsheet (Appendix 1)

Remember!

- Always do a blood glucose test if you feel low. You could feel low but your blood glucose might be high.
- If you feel low but you cannot do a test because you do not have your testing kit with you, always treat yourself for a low blood glucose level just in case and test your blood glucose level as soon as you can.
- If your blood glucose level is less than 4.0 mmol always eat or drink something sugary to bring it back up nice and quickly.

The list below shows the foods/drinks which you can have to bring your blood glucose levels up quickly and the foods/drinks which work too slowly and are not good to have when you are hypo.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Good: work quickly 😊</th>
<th>Not good: work slowly 😞</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dextrose tablets/Glucose tablets</td>
<td>Chocolate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coke (fun size can)</td>
<td>Biscuits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lucozade</td>
<td>Milk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jelly beans</td>
<td><strong>Remember!</strong> All of these have fat in them. Fat stops the sugar reaching your blood quickly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skittles</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glucogel</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- If you go low while you are doing anything active always sit down, treat your low blood glucose level and wait until your levels have returned to normal, you feel better and all of your hypo signs have gone.
• There are times when it can be difficult to bring your blood glucose level back up. This can happen if you are not very well eg if you have a tummy upset and cannot eat or drink very much. Please do not worry. This does not happen very often. There are things we can do and whoever is looking after you will know about that (If you would like to find out more you can read the leaflet on the Sick Day Rules)

**Handy Hypo Hints**

• Have your testing kit with you at all times.
• **Always** have a hypo kit with you to treat a low blood glucose level.
• Having a hypo can be scary. If you are worried about them please talk to the diabetes team. We are here to help you and can help you find out why you are going low and stop it from happening.
• If you are getting more than 3 hypo’s a week, please let the diabetes team know so that we can help you decide on what insulin doses might need to be changed.

It is really good you are learning more about how to look after your diabetes to keep you fit and well. **WELL DONE!**

**Appendix 1:**
Hypo treatment

Blood glucose level below 4.0mmol

**IMMEDIATELY** have rapid acting carbohydrate
(amount according to age)

**AFTER 15 MINUTES**
Re-test your blood glucose levels.
Are they above 5 mmol/L?

**NO 😞**
(Or you still feel hypo)
Repeat treatment

**YES 😊**
(And you feel better)
You may need a small snack

**Severe Hypo Treatment**
If child unable to swallow, or unconscious:
Give glucagen injection (orange box)

**follow up snacks when active**
- 1 digestive biscuit
- 2 jaffa cakes
- 2 rich tea biscuits

Please note that it is essential to **always** carry hypo treatment with you
Contacts/Further information

E-mail kidz.diabetes@addenbrookes.nhs.uk

Telephone: Monday to Friday 09:00 to 17:00 01223 274638
Out of hours: 01223 245151, ask for ‘child diabetes on rotawatch’

We are now a smoke-free site: smoking will not be allowed anywhere on the hospital site.

For advice and support in quitting, contact your GP or the free NHS stop smoking helpline on 0800 169 0 169.

Other formats:
If you would like this information in another language, large print or audio, please ask the department where you are being treated, to contact the patient information team: patient.information@addenbrookes.nhs.uk.

Please note: We do not currently hold many leaflets in other languages; written translation requests are funded and agreed by the department who has authored the leaflet.

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