Diabetes and low blood sugar

An adult action guide for hypoglycaemia

Low glucose needs prompt treatment. This guide is for adults; children and some insulin-pump users need their own agreed plan.

Recognise a hypo

- A blood glucose below 4 mmol/L is low. Shaking, sweating, hunger, palpitations, blurred vision or confusion can be warning signs.
- If you use insulin or a medicine that can cause hypos and notice symptoms, check glucose if possible. Do not delay treatment if you cannot test and suspect a hypo.

If awake and able to swallow safely

- Stop what you are doing. Take 15-20 g of fast-acting carbohydrate, such as glucose tablets or a non-diet sugary drink. Check the label to get the right amount.
- Recheck after 10-15 minutes. If still below 4 mmol/L, repeat fast-acting carbohydrate and check again after 10-15 minutes.
- Once above 4 mmol/L and improving, have your next meal or a longer-acting carbohydrate snack unless your diabetes team has given a different pump-specific plan.

Prevent another episode

- Carry glucose treatment and diabetes identification. Tell family or carers how to help. Discuss exercise, alcohol, missed meals and medicine timing with your team.
- Report repeated, severe or overnight hypos and reduced warning symptoms. Do not guess new insulin doses. Follow your written individual plan.

Severe hypo: call 112

If confused, very drowsy, fitting or unable to swallow safely, give nothing by mouth. Call 112. If unconscious but breathing normally, place on their side; use prescribed glucagon if trained. If not breathing normally, start CPR and follow the dispatcher.

My personal hypo plan

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Do not drive during a hypo. Discuss safe return to driving and Maltese requirements with your clinician.

Record the glucose, time, symptoms, treatment and possible trigger after an episode.

Medicines that can cause my glucose to fall

My fast-acting treatment and amount

Where I keep my glucose / glucagon

Emergency contact

Diabetes team contact

Review after a hypo / individual pump advice

Questions or notes for my appointment

Sources and further reading

NHS: low blood sugar
https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/low-blood-sugar-hypoglycaemia/

Diabetes UK: hypos and their treatment
https://www.diabetes.org.uk/about-diabetes/looking-after-diabetes/complications/hypos

General information. Follow your individual clinical plan. Sources checked 31 October 2026; review due October 2027.