

# What is Hypoglycaemia?

Hypoglycaemia (also called a hypo or low blood glucose level) occurs when the blood glucose level (BGL) drops to less than 4mmol/L or when hypo symptoms are present at a level close to 4mmol/L.

## What causes a hypo?

- Being physically active
- Delaying or missing a meal or snack
- Not eating enough carbohydrate
- Having too much insulin

## Symptoms of a hypo

These can include:

- Headache
- Looking pale
- Sweating
- Being irritable
- Trembling
- Feeling hungry
- Crying
- Feeling or acting confused



**If in doubt, treat the hypo, then do a blood glucose test.**

***A BGL less than 4mmol/L should be treated even when there are no symptoms***

## Treatment

### ***Mild to moderate hypo***

If the child is conscious and their BGL is 4mmol/L or less take the following steps:

### **Step 1**

Give any one of the following. You may need to coax the child to eat or drink

- 1/3-1/2 glass fruit juice or a small juice pack or
- 2-3 teaspoons sugar or honey or
- 5-7 jellybeans or
- 1/3-1/2 can soft drink (not diet) or
- Glucose tablets equivalent to 10-15gms



## Step 2

Follow up with some carbohydrate food such as fruit, a sandwich or biscuits. If a hypo occurs just before a scheduled meal or snack, follow with that meal or snack instead.



If your child uses an insulin pump, Lantus or Levemir, they may not need step 2

Symptoms usually disappear after 10-15 minutes. However, if the BGL remains low and symptoms are still present, repeat step 1 and stay with the child.

## Severe hypo

If the child has a fit or is unconscious, get emergency help fast!

- Do not attempt to give anything by mouth
- Lie the child on their side in the coma or recovery position, keep their airway clear
- Call the ambulance(000) and say in English (if able to) it is a “diabetes emergency” (they will use an interpreter service if there is any difficulty) or if it is available and you are trained to give it, give a Glucagon\* injection
- Stay with the child until help arrives

*\*Glucagon is a hormone that raises the BGL and is injected into the big muscle at the top front of the leg.*

Remember that a hypo can occur up to 16 hours after exercise. You can reduce the risk of a delayed hypo by extra blood glucose testing, giving the child extra carbohydrates and/or adjusting the insulin dose.

**For more information phone 1300 136 588 website: [www.diabeteskidsandteens.com.au](http://www.diabeteskidsandteens.com.au)**

## Need an interpreter?

A free telephone interpreter service is available for people who may have difficulty in understanding or speaking English. This service is available through the Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS) of the Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs (DIMIA).

TIS have access to professional interpreters in almost 2000 languages and dialects and can respond immediately to most requests.

## Accessing an interpreter:



1. Simply dial 131 450 for the Telephone Interpreting Service.

2. Explain the purpose for the call e.g. wanting to talk to an educator/dietitian at Diabetes Australia.

3. The operator will connect you to an interpreter in the required language and to a Diabetes Australia health

professional for a three-way conversation.

This free service has been set up by Diabetes Australia and will be promoted with assistance from the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing.