DR. ALI RAZA NAQVI · CONSULTANT ENDOCRINOLOGIST & DIABETOLOGIST

Low Blood Sugar (Hypoglycaemia)

How to recognise and treat a 'hypo' quickly

PATIENT INFORMATION LEAFLET



A hypo is when blood sugar falls below 70 mg/dL. It can happen if you take insulin or some diabetes tablets (such as sulphonylureas like gliclazide or glimepiride), miss a meal, or exercise more than usual.

1 Warning signs

- Shaking, sweating, fast heartbeat
- Hunger, dizziness, headache
- Confusion, irritability, blurred vision
- At night: nightmares, sweaty sheets, morning headache

2 Treat it with the 15–15 rule

- Check your sugar if you can
- Take 15–20 g fast sugar: 3–4 glucose tablets, OR ½ glass (150 ml) juice or regular cola, OR 3 teaspoons sugar in water
- Wait 15 minutes and check again
- If still below 70 mg/dL, repeat
- Then eat a snack such as a roti, biscuits or a banana

3 Preventing hypos

- Do not skip or delay meals after taking insulin or tablets
- Always carry glucose or sweets with you
- Check sugar before driving
- Have a snack before extra exercise
- Tell your doctor about any hypo — your dose may need changing

⚠ When to get medical help

- If the person is unconscious or cannot swallow safely, do NOT put food or drink in the mouth — place them on their side and get emergency help
- Repeated hypos, or hypos without warning signs

TIP Teach your family the signs of a hypo and where you keep your glucose.

Dr. Ali Raza Naqvi — FRCP (London)
Consultant Physician, Diabetologist & Endocrinologist
154 CCA 1, Plaza, Sector C, DHA Phase 6, Lahore · Mon–Sat 12–3 pm & 7–10 pm

Book online: dralirazanaqviendocrinologist.com

WhatsApp / Call: 0311 7215471

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