

DIABETES INFORMATION

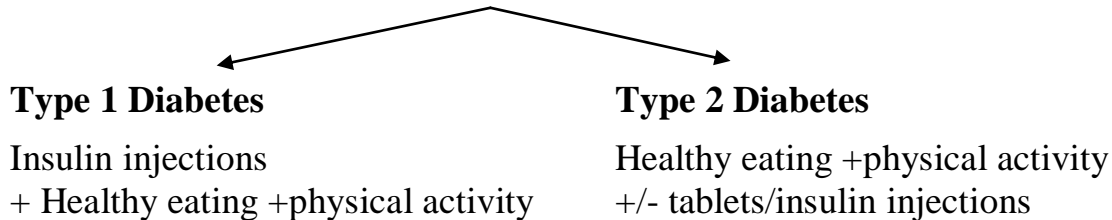


BRMC
Family Health

DIABETES SURVIVAL INFORMATION

1. What is Diabetes?

Diabetes occurs when there is either not enough insulin or when insulin doesn't work properly. Insulin is needed to move the glucose (sugar) from our blood into our body's cells so that we can use it for energy.



2. What is a Hypo?

Hypoglycaemia ('hypo') occurs when your blood glucose level drops too LOW (usually less than 4 mmol/L). A hypo can only occur if you are on diabetes tablets or insulin.

Causes of a Hypo

- ◆ Skipping meals or snacks
- ◆ Late meals or snacks
- ◆ Not enough carbohydrate food eaten at a meal or snack
- ◆ Extra physical activity
- ◆ Alcohol consumed on an empty stomach
- ◆ Too much insulin or diabetes tablets



Signs and Symptoms of a Hypo

- ◆ Sweating
- ◆ Shaking or trembling
- ◆ Hunger or nausea
- ◆ Headache
- ◆ Difficulty concentrating
- ◆ Palpitations
- ◆ Tiredness or weakness
- ◆ Dizziness
- ◆ Tingling around the mouth and lips
- ◆ Slurred speech



Low blood sugars – ‘hypo’

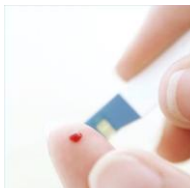


If your blood sugar is less than 4



Immediately

Eat 6 jellybeans




10 minutes later

Re-check your blood sugar



If your blood sugar is still **less than 4**

 **repeat the steps above**



When your blood sugar is **more than 4**

you are OK

Eat a sandwich

If your condition is worse - call 000.
If someone is **unconscious**
– **do not feed** them. Call 000.

If low blood sugars are happening regularly make an appointment to see your doctor.



Remember it is best to use multi-grain bread in your sandwich

Healthy eating for Diabetes

Healthy eating is an important part of managing blood glucose (sugar) levels. It is important to see a dietitian who can provide individual advice about healthy eating for diabetes.

What should I eat?

To help manage your diabetes, you need to:

- Eat three meals a day and spread these evenly throughout the day. Your doctor, diabetes educator or dietitian can tell you whether you need to eat snacks between meals.
- Base your meals on high fibre carbohydrate foods, such as wholegrain bread and cereals, beans, lentils, starchy vegetables (eg. potato) and fruits. A dietitian can tell you how much carbohydrate to eat at each meal.
- Choose protein foods that are lower in fat like lean meat, skinless chicken, fish and low fat dairy foods.
- Choose foods lower in fat (especially saturated fat). Saturated fat is not good for your heart. Limit foods high in saturated fat like fatty meat, butter, cheese, coconut milk, processed foods and take away foods. Include small amounts of healthier fats in your diet such as margarines, oils such as sunflower, soybean, olive and canola, fish, nuts, seeds and avocado.
- Limit foods that are high in sugar and/or fat like soft drink, lollies, chocolate, cakes, biscuits and pastries
- If you drink alcohol ask your doctor if it is safe for you and how much you can drink.
- Being active can help manage your diabetes. Ask your doctor what type of activity and how much is good for you.

3. What do I do if I am sick?

- **Step 1** - If you are on **insulin**, you must continue it, even if you are not eating your usual meals. You may even need extra insulin to control your blood glucose levels. You should talk to your local doctor if you are not confident with this.
- If you are on **tablets**, continue to take your normal dose of tablets even if you are not eating your normal meals.
- However, if you take the tablet METFORMIN you must stop taking this and contact your doctor
- If you take both insulin and tablets continue to take both (except metformin).
- **Step 2** – Drink plenty of fluids. If you are vomiting or have diarrhoea, dehydration can develop so drinking regularly is very important. Drink at least 1 glass every hour. It is preferred that you take small sips to make up the glass over the hour.
 - If your blood glucose level is **less than 15** mmol/L, drink sweetened fluids such as lemonade, Powerade, fruit juice, dry ginger ale.
 - If your blood glucose level is **greater than 15** mmol/L, drink unsweetened fluids such as tea, water, clear soup, diet lemonade.

Step 3 – Test your blood glucose level every 2 hours and record all results. If your blood glucose level is above 15 mmol/L on 2 occasions, contact your GP for advice. If you take insulin your doctor may advise you to take more insulin.

4. Self Blood Glucose Monitoring

It is important that you test your blood glucose levels on a regular basis. Regular testing allows you to monitor the effectiveness of your medication, eating plan and physical activity program and also assists in the prevention of short and long term complications of diabetes. Test at different times during the day. The useful times are before meals and before bed. You can also test 2-3 hours after meals if you wish. Normal blood glucose levels will vary for each individual.

Recommended blood glucose levels:**In hospital** 5-10 mmol/L**At home** 6-8 mmol/L**Elderly** 6-12 mmol/L

It is also important to write down the results of your blood glucose monitoring. You may use a diabetes record book (diary) or one similar to this. It is very important to take your record book and blood glucose monitor to any appointments with your doctor or diabetes educator, or if you go into hospital.

HbA1c – is a special blood test done by your doctor every 3 – 6 months to check your diabetes control. This test gives a 3-month average of your blood glucose levels. You should discuss your result with your doctor.

5. Physical Activity

Any form of exercise is good for you. Some examples include walking, swimming and cycling. Always check with your doctor or health care team before starting an exercise program.

6. Check your feet

Checking your feet every day is very important. To keep your feet healthy:

- ◆ Check your feet every day for cuts, blisters, corns, callous
- ◆ Keep your feet clean, and don't forget to dry between your toes
- ◆ Ensure your shoes fit well and buy shoes in the afternoon
- ◆ Do NOT walk around with bare feet
- ◆ Cut and file nails carefully
- ◆ Moisturise your feet daily (not between your toes)
- ◆ Have regular foot “check-ups” (at minimum once every 12 months) with a podiatrist – A care plan can be organised and podiatry visits can be included within the 5 Medicare subsidised visits/year for allied health professionals to assist with your care.
- ◆ See your doctor immediately if something on your foot is not healing.



7. Have your eyes tested

Having your eyes tested is also very important. You need to see an eye specialist or optometrist to have eye photographs every one to two years. You may need to have your eyes tested more regularly if a problem is detected.



8. Driving

If you take medications for your diabetes (i.e. tablets or insulin) and you drive a motor vehicle, you are required to inform Vic Roads. If you take tablets, you will need to undergo 5 yearly reviews for your licence. If you take insulin, you will undergo licence reviews every 2 years. Your doctor can undertake this review, which includes a vision check and general diabetes check.

9. Sexual Dysfunction

Sexual dysfunction is common in diabetes and requires further assessment before commencing treatment. If you are experiencing problems please speak to your doctor or diabetes educator.



10. Pre pregnancy counselling

If you are planning on becoming pregnant it is important that you have tight blood glucose control well before the pregnancy. Please speak to your doctor or diabetes educator about pre-pregnancy counselling.

13. Stress

One of the body's usual responses to stress is to increase blood glucose levels. Although you can't always control the amount of stress in your life, you can learn to cope with it. It is important to include enough relaxation, physical activity and recreation in your life to help you to unwind. If there are ongoing problems, discuss with your doctor the option for a referral to a psychologist.



14. What is the National Diabetes Services Scheme (NDSS)?

The NDSS is a government-funded program, which subsidises the cost of needles and blood testing strips for people with diabetes. Registration with NDSS is free of charge. To register you need to complete the registration form and have it signed by your medical practitioner or credentialed diabetes educator. The form needs to be sent to: **Diabetes Australia. GPO Box 9824 in your state/capital city.** You will then be sent your NDSS card in the mail. Always take this card with you when purchasing diabetes supplies from your NDSS chemist. You should also take your pension card/healthcare card or DVA card if you have one.

16. Where can I obtain strips/needles/pens?

Diabetes Australia is the main NDSS outlet for purchase of strips, needles and insulin pen devices. It is important that you have your NDSS card and health care/ DVA or pension card with you when making purchases. Some pharmacies also operate as an NDSS outlet. If you purchase supplies from these pharmacies (with your NDSS card) the cost is very small. If you want to purchase these supplies from other pharmacies you will require a prescription from your doctor and the cost will be higher.



17. Where can I obtain a sharps container?

Syringes, insulin pen needles and lancets are medical waste that must be disposed of safely. They **must not** be disposed of in the rubbish bin or in a glass jar or container made from thin plastic. **They must be placed in a specific sharps container.** Some local city councils supply sharps containers to people with diabetes free of charge. You can also obtain a sharps container from Diabetes Australia Victoria or your local pharmacy; however there may be a charge. Contact your council to find out if they provide sharps containers and where you can collect one. Once your container is full you need to return it to the council and get a new one.

18. Who to contact in the case of a diabetes emergency after discharge

In the case of an emergency you need to contact one of the following:

1. Your GP
2. Your Endocrinologist
3. Your Diabetes Educator

If you are unable to get in contact with any of these people you need to go to your **closest Emergency Department**. If you are unconscious an **ambulance** needs to be called.

Research Trials

St Vincent's Hospital is involved in diabetes research trials. If you are interested in receiving any information, please discuss this with your doctor. **They will pass on your details.**

Websites of Interest

1. <http://www.diabetesvic.org.au/>
2. www.worldwidediabetes.com
3. <http://www.diabetes.org/home.jsp>
4. <http://www.d1.org.au/>