



Care Home information: Diabetic hypos and swallowing difficulties

Hypos

Residents who have diabetes which is treated with insulin or sulphonylureas (e.g. Gliclazide, Glipizide, Glibenclamide) can experience low blood sugars (a hypo).

When a hypo is detected, it is usually treated by immediately either eating a set amount of sweets or taking a drink which provides 15g glucose (e.g. 150ml non-diet fizzy drink; 200ml orange juice; 4 – 5 Glucotabs; 5 – 6 Dextrose tablets; 4 jelly babies).

Swallowing difficulties

Drinks as a hypo treatment are not appropriate for residents who need thickened fluids because:

- The drinks would have to be thickened, which can delay treatment
- It may be difficult for a resident with a swallowing difficulty to take the full volume of the thickened drink quickly enough, which can delay treatment

Sweets as a hypo treatment would not be appropriate for residents who need a pureed or soft diet because:

- Sweets would not be an appropriate texture

In this situation, a low volume, concentrated source of glucose which will not significantly increase the risks associated with a swallowing difficulty is needed instead

Recommended treatment:

- **30ml liquid glucose** (which provides 15g glucose). This hypo treatment should be given using a teaspoon

After 5 – 10 minutes, if the person does not start to feel better or if their blood sugar is still less than 4mmol/l - repeat the above treatment

When the person starts to feel better either:

- Give their next meal or
- If their next meal is not due, give a starchy food which is the texture advised by their Speech and Language Therapist (SLT) e.g. soft or puree



The residents hypo box should always contain:

- A new (unopened) tube of liquid glucose
- A small measuring cup (which holds 30ml)
- A teaspoon
- A copy of this guidance

This hypo treatment **is not prescribed** and can be purchased from any large supermarket

If the tube of glucose syrup has been opened, ensure that it is replaced with a new, unopened tube of glucose syrup as soon as possible

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Date ratified	November 2016 (Medicines Management Subcommittee) Amended June 2017
Review date	November 2019