



### Hypoglycaemia (low blood sugar)

When the blood-sugar level falls below normal (hypoglycaemia) brain function is affected. This problem is sometimes recognised by a rapidly deteriorating level of response.

Hypoglycaemia can occur in people with diabetes and, more rarely, appear with an epileptic seizure. It can also complicate heat exhaustion or hypothermia.

### Recognition features

There may be:

- A history of diabetes; the casualty may recognise the onset of a "hypo" attack. The symptoms of which are detailed below
- Weakness, faintness, or hunger
- Palpitations and muscle tremors
- Strange actions or behaviour; the casualty may seem confused or angry
- Sweating and cold, clammy skin
- Pulse may be rapid and strong
- Deteriorating level of response
- Diabetic's warning card, glucose gel, tablets, or an insulin syringe in casualty's possessions.

### Treatment

Your aim is to raise the sugar content of the blood as quickly as possible and to obtain medical help

if necessary.

- Help the casualty to sit or lie down
- Give them a sugary drink, sugar lumps or sweet food. Don't give them diet drinks, they don't have the sugar in them that they need
- Alternatively, if the patient has their own glucose gel help them to take it.

**If the casualty responds quickly:**

- Give them more food and drink and let them rest until they feel better
- Advise them to see their doctor even if they feel fully recovered.

**Warning!** If their consciousness is impaired don't give them anything to eat or drink as they may not be able to swallow or drink it properly.

**If the condition does not improve:**

- Monitor the level of response and look for any other possible causes.

**If the casualty is unconscious:**

- Open the airway and check breathing (primary survey)
- Give chest compressions and rescue breaths if necessary
- If the patient loses consciousness but is still breathing normally place them in the recovery position
- **Dial 999 for an ambulance**