

## **Home blood glucose monitoring**

The aim of treatment is to try to maintain your glucose level to as near a “non -diabetic” range as possible. In general terms this means to aim towards 4 -7 mmol/l before meals, and around 8 mmol/l if testing 2 hours after meals. This can be difficult at times as you are trying to mimic what the body had previously done of its own accord, and your readings may vary depending your carbohydrate intake, exercise and many other daily factors.

This management takes time and practice and requires that you work closely with your doctor, diabetes nurse specialist and other members of your diabetes care team. They’ll guide you to maintain the best possible blood glucose control.

## **HbA1c**

This is known as the “long term test” and is performed by a medical professional. This is a measure of your blood glucose control over a period of the previous approx 6 -8 weeks. It is a very good indicator of your overall control of your condition despite the odd high or low readings you may have had during that time.

## **Hyperglycaemia or Hypoglycaemia**

This can be caused by high or low glucose levels.

High blood glucose levels, also know as Hyperglycaemia or Hyper.

You will notice that your blood glucose level may be higher if you:

- Are not taking enough insulin
- Miss or forget to take your insulin ( or take a lower amount in error)
- Eat more carbohydrate foods than usual
- Are less active than usual
- Are under stress
- Have an illness eg cold flu, infection (see further info re illness below)
- Sometimes it may be difficult to find a reason

Low blood glucose levels, also known as Hypoglycaemia or Hypo.

You may notice that your blood glucose may go to low (ie. Under 4 mmol/l) if you:

- Take too much insulin
- Eat less carbohydrate than usual
- Leave too long between meals
- Do more activity than usual
- Following alcohol (which may not occur until a few hours later)\*
- Sometimes you may not find an obvious reason

People with diabetes tend to “get to know” what situations they may be likely to experience a HYPO, and learn to try avoid or pre-empt these situations where possible.

Symptoms may include;

- Feeling sweaty or cold
- Trembling or feeling weak
- Feeling irritable upset or angry
- Inability to concentrate
- Drowsy or difficulty in waking up

It's important that you learn to recognise your particular warning signs and understand how to take appropriate action promptly. HYPOS can happen in minutes and need to be treated immediately so BE RESPONSIBLE.

**Remember:**

- Be aware of your hypo symptoms and treat as necessary
- Always carry quick acting carbs with you
- Inform your friends and colleagues about diabetes, the need to take insulin, test glucose levels and very importantly what to do in the event of a hypo event
- Carry diabetes identification

**Walking the tightrope**

Few people with diabetes can avoid episodes of low blood glucose completely. Hypoglycaemia is, to some extent, a result of trying to keep the blood sugar near to normal. Most people who strive for good blood sugar control experience hypoglycaemia more often than those who are less motivated.