

## Hyperglycaemia Hyperosmolar States (HHS)

The hyperglycaemia hyperosmolar state (HHS) is a condition that can lead to death if not well managed. It happens when blood sugar levels rise to extremely high levels like 600mg/dl or 33 millimoles per liter or even higher. It may occur among people who do not know they have type 2 diabetes, or those who have type 2 diabetes and are not monitoring their blood sugar levels regularly or who have sudden illness or trauma that can lead to very high blood sugar levels.

HHS often starts with symptoms of dehydration such as frequent thirst and going to the bathroom to urinate. If not managed blood sugar continues to rise until the following symptoms begin to manifest;

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- Drowsiness, confusion.
- Hallucinations.
- Vision loss.
- Convulsions.
- Coma.

As soon HHS is recognized, it is important to call for help and get to the hospital immediately. HHS cannot be treated at home. It must be managed in the hospital by a medical care team with the expertise and skills to manage HHS.

### **Preventing HHS**

HHS can be prevented if the following steps are taken:

- Recognize the symptoms of high blood sugar like increased thirst, increased urinating, dry mouth and skin or fever.
- Monitor blood sugar level and be vigilant when blood sugar levels begin to rise above 13 mmol/L. This is important when there is another illness or infection
- Drink plenty of water especially in hot and dry weather and when sick
- Adhere to medications as well as dietary and physical activity plans.