

# Managing your diabetes when taking laxative bowel preparation

Information and advice for patients

## *Radiology*

If you have diabetes and need to have a laxative before your CT colonoscopy, then you will need to follow these instructions carefully along with the laxative instructions we have sent you.

How you manage your diabetes when taking the laxative will depend on whether you take diabetic tablets or insulin. This leaflet provides information for both.

As preparation for your procedure you cannot eat solid food from the day before the test. Because of this, there is an increased risk that your blood sugar level could become too low (this is hypoglycaemia or a 'hypo'). The enclosed leaflet gives you more detailed information about hypoglycaemia.

You may also have higher blood sugar levels than normal for a couple of days around the time of the test, but they should return to normal after that.

### **What are the symptoms of hypoglycaemia?**

The symptoms of hypoglycaemia include:

- Feeling shaky
- Dizziness
- Sweating even when it is not warm
- Hunger
- Weakness
- Fast heart beat or palpitations

### **How can I prevent hypoglycaemia?**

During the time you are not able to eat solid food you can still have sugary drinks such as:

- Fizzy drinks (not diet or sugar-free)
- Energy drinks, such as Lucozade
- Smooth orange juice (no bits)
- 4 teaspoons of sugar dissolved in 200ml of water

If you feel you are at risk of hypoglycaemia you should aim to have a glass of the above every 2 hours.

### **What should I do if I have the symptoms of hypoglycaemia?**

If you have any of these symptoms, or if you normally test your blood sugar level and it drops below 5mmol/L, you should have 5 dextrose tablets or drink sugary drinks as above.

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### **If you take diabetic tablets**

#### **On the day before the test**

- Take your diabetic tablets as normal, but avoid taking them within an hour of taking Picolax (laxative) as they may be flushed through your gut without taking effect.
- If you normally check your blood sugar level, check it every 2 hours.
- If your blood sugar level is below 5mmol/L or you have any of the symptoms of hypoglycaemia, have a sugary drink as described above.
- Go to bed as normal.

#### **On the day of the test**

- Do not take your diabetic tablets before the test.
- If you normally check your blood sugar level, check it every 2 hours.
- If your blood sugar level is below 5mmol/L or you have any of the symptoms of hypoglycaemia, have a sugary drink as described.

#### **After the test**

- When you start eating normally again you can start taking your diabetic tablets as normal.
- If you normally check your blood sugar level, check it every 2 hours for the first 4 hours after the test, and then every 4 hours for the next 2 days.
- If you do not normally have to check your blood sugar level, watch out for the symptoms of a hypo and take sugary drinks as necessary.

### **If you take insulin**

#### **On the day before the test**

- Once you stop eating solid food on the day before the test insulin doses should be halved.
- Check your blood sugar level every 2 hours.
- If your blood sugar level is below 5mmol/L or you have any of the symptoms of hypoglycaemia, have a sugary drink as described above.
- Go to bed as normal.

#### **On the day of the test**

- Take half of your normal morning dose of insulin.
- Check your blood sugar level every 2 hours.

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- If your blood sugar level is below 5mmol/L or you have any of the symptoms of hypoglycaemia, have a sugary drink as described above.

## After the test

- When you start eating normally again you can start taking your insulin as normal.
- Check your blood sugar level every 2 hours for the first 4 hours after the test, and then every 4 hours for the next 2 days.

## Contact details

If you have any questions or concerns please contact the diabetes specialist nurses.

**City Hospital:** 0121 507 6007

**Sandwell Hospital:** 0121 507 3063

Monday – Friday, 9am – 5pm

## Further information

For more information about our hospitals and services please see our websites [www.swbh.nhs.uk](http://www.swbh.nhs.uk) and [www.swbhengage.com](http://www.swbhengage.com), follow us on Twitter @SWBHnhs and like us on Facebook [www.facebook.com/SWBHnhs](http://www.facebook.com/SWBHnhs).

## Sources of evidence used for the information in this leaflet

NHS Diabetes, 'Management of adults with diabetes undergoing surgery and elective procedures: improving standards', April 2011

If you would like to suggest any amendments or improvements to this leaflet please contact the communications department on 0121 507 5495 or email: [swb-tr.swbh-gm-patient-information@nhs.net](mailto:swb-tr.swbh-gm-patient-information@nhs.net)



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