

A Guide to Insulin Treated Diabetes and Driving

Drivers who have any form of diabetes treated with any insulin preparation must inform DVLA (Caveat: See Temporary Insulin Treatment)

HYPOGLYCAEMIA

Hypoglycaemia (also known as a hypo) is the medical term for a low blood glucose (sugar) level.

Severe hypoglycaemia means the assistance of another person is required.

The risk of hypoglycaemia is the main danger to safe driving and this risk increases the longer you are on insulin treatment. This may endanger your own life as well as that of other road users. Many of the accidents caused by hypoglycaemia are because drivers carry on driving even though they get warning symptoms of hypoglycaemia. If you get warning symptoms of hypoglycaemia whilst driving, you must always stop as soon as safely possible – **do not ignore the warning symptoms.**

EARLY SYMPTOMS OF HYPOGLYCAEMIA INCLUDE:

Sweating, shakiness or trembling, feeling hungry, fast pulse or palpitations, anxiety, tingling lips.

If you don't treat this it may result in more severe symptoms such as:

Slurred speech, difficulty concentrating, confusion, disorderly or irrational behaviour, which may be mistaken for drunkenness.

If left untreated this may lead to unconsciousness.

DRIVERS WITH INSULIN TREATED DIABETES ARE ADVISED TO TAKE THE FOLLOWING PRECAUTIONS.

- You should **always** carry your glucose meter and blood glucose strips with you. You should check your blood glucose no more than 30 minutes before the start of the first journey and every two hours whilst you are driving. If driving multiple short journeys, you do not necessarily need to test before each additional journey as long as you test every 2 hours while driving.
- In each case if your blood glucose is **5.0mmol/l or less, take a snack**. If it is less than **4.0mmol/l** or you feel hypoglycaemic, **do not drive**.
- If hypoglycaemia develops while driving, stop the vehicle as soon as possible.
- You should switch off the engine, remove the keys from the ignition and move from the driver's seat.
- You should not start driving until 45 minutes after blood glucose has returned to normal. It takes up to 45 minutes for the brain to recover fully.
- Always keep an emergency supply of fast-acting carbohydrate such as glucose tablets or sweets within easy reach in the vehicle.
- You should carry personal identification to show that you have diabetes in case of injury in a road traffic accident.
- Particular care should be taken during changes of insulin regimens, changes of lifestyle, exercise, travel and pregnancy.
- You must take regular meals, snacks and rest periods on long journeys. Always avoid alcohol.

EYESIGHT

All drivers are required by law to read, in good daylight (with glasses or corrective lenses if necessary), a car number plate from a distance of 20 metres. In addition, the visual acuity (with the aid of glasses or contact lenses if worn) must be at least 6/12 (0.5 decimal) with both eyes open, or in the only eye if monocular.

LIMB PROBLEMS

Limb problems/amputations are unlikely to prevent driving. They may be overcome by driving certain types of vehicles e.g. automatics or one with hand controls.

YOU MUST INFORM DVLA IF:

- You suffer more than one episode of severe hypoglycaemia (needing the assistance of another person) within the last 12 months. For Group 2 drivers (bus/lorry) one episode of severe hypoglycaemia must be reported immediately. You must also tell us if you or your medical team feels you are at high risk of developing hypoglycaemia.
- You develop impaired awareness of hypoglycaemia. (difficulty in recognising the warning symptoms of low blood sugar)
- You suffer severe hypoglycaemia while driving.
- An existing medical condition gets worse or you develop any other condition that may affect you driving safely.

CONTACT US

Web site: www.gov.uk/browse/driving

Tel: 0300 790 6806 (8.00am. to 5.30pm. Mon – Fri) & (8.00 am. to 1pm. Saturday)

Write: Drivers' Medical Group, DVLA, Swansea SA99 1TU

For further informations on diabetes visit www.diabetes.org.uk

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DVLA Driving Guidance for patients with diabetes

Patient Details
Patient Name
Date of Birth
Health Professionals name

I am the patient named above. My diabetes health professional has explained the **DVLA driving guidance** to me.

I have read and understood the guidance ☐

I have had the guidance read and explained to me ☐

Patients Signature_____ **Date**_____

Health Professionals Signature_____ **Date** _____