

DIET FOR REACTIVE HYPOGLYCEMIA

Reactive hypoglycemia occurs when blood glucose falls, glycogen stores are exhausted and an individual chooses not to eat. Symptoms can include anxiety, hunger, dizziness, weakness, irritability and jitteriness. Most of these symptoms diminish within minutes after eating a source of carbohydrate. Because these symptoms are common to many conditions, a health care provider should be consulted to determine whether an individual has true reactive hypoglycemia.

WHO IS AFFECTED BY REACTIVE HYPOGLYCEMIA?

Reactive hypoglycemia occurs in about 2-3 out of every 10 young women - more often in obese women and less often in people over age 45. While most people experience low blood glucose levels at times, if the symptoms are severe or ongoing it is important to learn to eat a balanced meal or snack promptly. Reactive hypoglycemia does not lead to more severe conditions.

HOW CAN I CONTROL REACTIVE HYPOGLYCEMIA?

Reactive hypoglycemia can be managed with:

- Nutritionally balanced meals
- Frequent meals and snacks
- Regular exercise
- Weight management
- Medical supervision if indicated

Consume foods with complex carbohydrates (whole grain crackers, whole grain breads or cereals). Complex carbohydrate foods deliver glucose over a longer period of time, eliciting less of a rise and fall in blood glucose. Consuming carbohydrate rich foods with lowfat cheese or another protein/fat is the best choice. The protein/fat slows down the digestion of the carbohydrate and keeps blood sugar more stable.

Some snack and meal suggestions that meet the goal of including a complex carbohydrate, a protein source or a fat include:

- Meat or lowfat cheese sandwich on whole wheat bread
- Yogurt and fruit
- 2% cottage cheese and whole grain crackers
- Turkey, lowfat cheese slices and veggies on a salad
- Salad with beans
- Peanut butter and whole grain crackers
- Bean soup and whole grain crackers or ww bread
- Lowfat cheese on baked potato with skin

EATING TIPS TO CONTROL HYPOGLYCEMIA:

- Eat a small meal or snack about every 2-3 hours.
- Choose high fiber foods at each meal and snack. Fiber helps stabilize blood sugar.
- Increase fluid intake when you increase fiber intake.
- Eat a source of protein and or a source of fat with carbohydrate at each meal or snack. Protein and fat eaten with carbohydrates will help slow glucose release and absorption.
- Limit simple sugars. (candy, soda, fruit juice) Simple sugar intake can make hypoglycemia symptoms worse.
- Limit alcohol and caffeine (coffee, tea, chocolate).