



## Driving and Diabetes

Getting your driver's license is an exciting and busy time. In addition to learning how to drive safely, you also need to learn how to drive safely with diabetes.

If you drive when you're diagnosed with type 1 diabetes, you must notify the Ministry of Transportation when you apply for your driver's license.

### Key Points about diabetes and driving

1. When you take insulin for diabetes, you are at risk of having a low blood sugar while driving. Insulin can lower your blood sugar quickly, making you at risk of having hypoglycemia (a low blood glucose) while you are driving, which could cause an accident. This could lead to you being charged for driving under the influence (of insulin), dangerous driving or driving without due care and attention. More importantly, this could lead to harm to you or to someone else. *Even a mild low blood glucose can affect your driving.*
2. Your blood sugar should be over 5.0 mmol/L to drive. The best way to remember is the saying ***"Over 5 to Drive"***.
3. If you have had a low blood sugar with *symptoms* before or while driving, you should treat and then wait for at least 40 minutes until you start driving again.
4. You must test your blood glucose within 30 minutes of starting to drive, and then every 2-4 hours of your journey.
5. You also need to make sure you have something to treat hypoglycemia, and a snack with long-acting carbs in your car. If you feel your levels are low, stop driving as soon as it's safe, remove the key from the ignition and get out of the driver's seat. *Don't check your glucose level or treat your hypo while you're driving.* Once you've treated your hypo, wait for 15 minutes, recheck your blood glucose, and eat some carbohydrate. ***When you feel completely normal, wait 40 minutes until you drive again.***
6. If you drive a commercial vehicle, there are different guidelines for your blood sugar level. Please discuss with your health care provider and check the website below for information about *Diabetes and Commercial Driving*.

<https://guidelines.diabetes.ca/browse/chapter21#sec3>

### What can you do to be safe driving?

- If BG is 4.0 – 5.0 mmol/L, eat a snack with at least 15 grams of CHO. Make sure that your BG is >5.0 mmol/L before driving.

CHEO Diabetes Lab  
If you have any questions regarding your worksheet, please ask the Educator on duty  
April 2019



- If BG is less than 4.0, do not drive. Treat low and eat. You should wait for 40 minutes before driving and be sure that you are above 5mmol/L before getting behind the wheel. *This is how long it takes you to fully recover from a low blood glucose.*
- Wear a medic alert bracelet.
- Always have your BG testing kit, fast acting sugar, and long acting CHO as an emergency kit in the car.

#### **When is it unsafe to drive?**

- A person who has frequent hypoglycemia may not be fit to drive. Same is true of someone that does not regularly test their blood glucose.
- Caution should be used if someone were recently diagnosed with diabetes and are learning how to use insulin.
- A person who is unable to recognize early signs of hypoglycemia.
- A person who has had moderate hypoglycemia (needing others' help) or severe hypoglycemia (needing emergency medical care) within the last 6 months.

*\*\*By law, doctors must report anyone they consider to be unfit to drive.*

***If you have questions, please speak to one of the Diabetes Educators. If you feel confident, take our quick quiz to test your knowledge!***

CHEO Diabetes Lab  
If you have any questions regarding your worksheet, please ask the Educator on duty  
April 2019



## Driving and Diabetes Worksheet

- 1.) What do I do if I feel like my blood sugar is low while driving?
  - a.) Keep driving and try to test as I drive
  - b.) Pull to side, stop, take keys out of ignition and test my BG and treat if low
  - c.) Ask someone in the car to give me juice
  - d.) Ignore it and hope it goes away
  
- 2.) How long should I wait to drive again if I did have to treat a low blood glucose?
  - a.) 24 hours
  - b.) 12 hours
  - c.) 40 minutes
  - d.) 15 minutes
  
- 3.) What Blood glucose level is safe to drive at?
  - a.) 4.2
  - b.) 5.0
  - c.) 3.8
  - d.) 4.0
  
- 4.) How do I treat a low once I have stopped driving?
  - a.) With just juice
  - b.) With 15 grams of fast acting sugar, followed by extra 15 grams of complex CHO
  - c.) With just 15 grams of CHO
  - d.) A dex tablet

CHEO Diabetes Lab  
If you have any questions regarding your worksheet, please ask the Educator on duty  
April 2019



## Driving and Diabetes – Answer Sheet

- 1.) What do I do if I feel like my blood sugar is low while driving?
  - a). Keep driving and try to test as I drive
  - b). Pull to side, stop, take keys out of ignition and test my BG and treat if ow**
  - c). Ask someone in the car to give me juice
  - d). Ignore it and hope it goes away
  
- 2.) How long should I wait to drive again if I did have to treat a low blood glucose?
  - a). 24 hours
  - b). 12 hours
  - c). 40 minutes**
  - d). 15 minutes
  
- 3.) What Blood glucose level is safe to drive at?
  - a) 4.2 mmol/L
  - b) 5.0 mmol/L**
  - c) 3.0 mmol/L
  - d) 4.0 mmol/L
  
- 4.) How do I treat a low once I have stopped driving?
  - a). With just juice
  - b) With 15 grams of fast acting sugar, followed by 15 grams of complex CHO**
  - c) With just 15 grams of CHO
  - d) A Dex tablet

CHEO Diabetes Lab  
If you have any questions regarding your worksheet, please ask the Educator on duty  
April 2019