

Hypoglycemia

Hypoglycemia or blood sugar is a disorder of blood sugar metabolism which may result in diabetes in later life. It is a condition in which the pancreas produces too much insulin, causing the blood sugar to drop.

Symptoms

A craving for sweets and starches in excessive amount between meals is the first sign of low blood sugar level. When the blood sugar level falls much below normal, symptoms such as nervousness, irritability, fatigue, depression, disturbed vision and headache appear. Other symptoms are sweating, trembling, numbness, absent-mindedness, dizziness, palpitation of the heart and some sexual disturbances. Most hypoglycemia patients feel hungry and eat frequently to get over the feeling of weakness and emotional irritability. They feel tense if they have to go without food for several hours.

Treatment

The high animal protein diet generally prescribed for hypoglycemia is not suitable for this disorder. It may help control the condition temporarily, but it is harmful in many other respects and may result in other diseases like heart trouble, arteries, kidney problems and cancer. The ideal diet for hypoglycemia should be based on three basic food groups, namely grains, seeds and nuts, vegetable oils. Seeds, nuts and grains should be the main constituents of the diet. Seeds and nuts should be taken in their raw form. Grains, in the form of cereals, should be cooked. Cooked grains are digested slowly and release sugar into the blood gradually six to eight hours after meals. This will keep the blood sugar level normal and constant for a long period.

Persons suffering from low blood sugar should take six to eight small meals a day instead of two or three large ones. Eating raw nuts and seeds such as pumpkin or sunflower seeds or drinking milk, butter milk or fruit juices between meals will be highly beneficial. All refined and processed foods, white sugar, white flour and their by-products should be completely eliminated from the diet. Coffee, alcohol and soft drinks should also be avoided. The consumption of salt should be reduced as an excessive intake of salt causes loss of blood potassium, which causes blood sugar to drop. The following is the menu suggested for hypoglycemia.

On rising: Fresh fruits such as apples, peaches, melons, berries, avocado or a glass of fresh fruit juice.

Breakfast: Nuts, seeds, fruit, cottage cheese and buttermilk.

Mid-morning: Fruit, fruit juice or tomato juice.

Lunch: Cooked cereals and milk.

Mid-afternoon: A glass of fruit or vegetable juice or a snack consisting of nuts.

Dinner: Vegetable salad with a cooked vegetable from among those allowed, one or two slices of whole wheat bread, cottage cheese and butter milk.

On retiring: A glass of milk or buttermilk.

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Vegetables which can be taken in hypoglycemia are asparagus, beets, carrots, cucumbers, egg-plants, peas, radishes, tomatoes, spinach, kale, lettuce, beans, baked potatoes. Fruits which can be taken are apples, apricots, berries, peaches, and pineapples. Consumption of citrus fruits should be limited.

Foods rich in vitamin C, E and B-complex are highly beneficial in the treatment of low blood sugar. Vitamins C and B increase tolerance to sugar and carbohydrates and help normalize sugar metabolism. Pantothenic acid, and vitamin B6 help to build up adrenals which are generally exhausted in persons with hypoglycemia. Vitamin E improves glycogen storage in the muscles and tissues. The patient should take vitamin C in large doses from 2,000 to 5,000 mg.; B6 50 mg. and vitamin E upto 1,600 Iu daily.

Proper rest is essential for those suffering from low blood sugar. A tranquil mind is of utmost importance in this condition. Nervous strain and anxiety should be relieved by simple methods of meditation and relaxation. Yogasanas like vakrasana, bhujasana, halasana, sarbagasana and shavasana and pranayama like kapalbhati and anuloma-viloma will be beneficial. A prolonged neutral immersion bath is also helpful in relieving mental tension.

Reference

Shri H.K. Bakhru. (1999). Natures Cure.