

Where can You get More Information?

To find a dietitian, please call 6357 8322 for appointment. You will need to obtain a referral from your doctor for a dietitian consultation.

Department of **NUTRITION & DIETETICS**

Alcohol and Diabetes Mellitus



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What are the Symptoms of Hypoglycaemia?

(Low Blood Sugar, <4 mmol/L)



Cold
Sweat



Weakness/Fatigue



Shaking



Extreme
Hunger



Dizziness

If left untreated, hypoglycaemia may lead to loss of consciousness.

Severe hypoglycaemia may lead to coma, and even death.

Drinking alcohol increases the risk of hypoglycaemia. The symptoms may be mistaken as being drunk, leading to dangerous consequences.

What Happens When You Drink?

- 1) Normally, the liver releases glucose (sugar) to maintain your blood sugar above the minimal level (>4 mmol/L).
- 2) When you drink alcohol, your liver focuses on breaking down alcohol to prevent damage to the other organs. As such, your liver is unable to release sugar at its usual rate and this results in hypoglycaemia.

Avoid alcohol if you have poorly controlled diabetes mellitus, high triglycerides, kidney disease and/or heart disease.



If your blood sugar levels are well controlled, please consider the following suggestions if you choose to drink alcohol.

- ✓ Drink in moderation. You should have at least 2 alcohol free days per week.
 - Women should have no more than 1 standard drink per day
 - Men should have no more than 2 standard drinks per day

What is a standard drink?



1 standard drink contains 10g alcohol

- ✓ Do not drink on an empty stomach. You should eat food containing carbohydrate while drinking.
- ✓ Use sugar free soda/water to dilute your drink.
- ✓ Check your blood sugar often e.g. before bed, and be mindful of potential hypoglycaemia at night. If it is <6 mmol/L before bed, you should eat a snack (1 serve of carbohydrate) e.g. 1 piece of fruit, 1 slice of wholemeal bread or 3 pieces of wholemeal biscuits.
- ✓ Prepare a box of sugar containing sweets by bedside to treat any hypoglycaemia.
- ✓ Ensure people around you know that you have diabetes and are aware of hypoglycaemia management so they can assist you if you experience any symptoms.