

Safety Alert - Diabetes and launch driving

Diabetes should be regarded as a medical condition rather than a disease. Most people with diabetes become experts on the management of their condition and can live perfectly normal lives. Having diabetes does not mean that you need to give up rowing or coaching, but it does mean that you need to plan, and keep track of your blood glucose levels.

There are some vehicle driving restrictions that affect people with diabetes, these are summarised at <https://www.diabetes.org.uk/Guide-to-diabetes/Life-with-diabetes/Driving/>

This information can be used to provide the following guidance on launch driving and other activities where extra care is needed. You would be well advised not to drive a launch or undertake other sensitive activities if:-

- Your doctor advises you not to do so, or
- You have had two episodes of severe hypoglycaemia within the last 12 months (where you were completely dependent on another person to treat your hypo), or
- You develop impaired awareness of hypoglycaemia (where you are unable to recognise the hypo when it starts), or
- You experience a disabling hypo whilst driving, or
- You have other medical conditions or changes to existing medical conditions which could affect your ability to drive safely. (e.g. problems with vision, circulation, or sensation).

Hypo-related problems are most likely to happen on sulphonylurea or glinide tablets. If you are unsure whether your medication could cause hypos check with your diabetes care team. Hyperglycaemia (high blood glucose levels) can also affect the ability to drive.

If your blood glucose is 5mmol/l or less you should take carbohydrate before driving. If it is less than 4mmol/l do not drive.

Other tips

- Avoid delaying or missing meals and snacks,
- Always keep hypo treatments to hand, and
- Do not drink alcohol and drive.

Do not continue to drive, ignoring your hypo warning signs (e.g. hunger, increased appetite or heart rate, loss of concentration, sweating, feeling faint). If you have a hypo whilst driving:

- Stop somewhere safe.
- Take some fast-acting carbohydrate, such as glucose tablets or sweets, and some form of longer-acting carbohydrate. Take longer acting carbohydrate if you need to.
- Do not start driving until 45 minutes after blood glucose has returned normal.

If you have poor warning signs, or have frequent hypos, you should probably not be driving a launch. For more information see <https://www.diabetes.org.uk/> .