Hypoglycemia of Infancy

Hypoglycemia (low blood sugar) in a newborn is common in pregnancies of diabetic mothers. During pregnancy, the fetus is exposed to high blood sugar levels (from the mother). The pancreas of the fetus responds by making more insulin. After birth, when this increase in insulin happens, it causes the blood sugar to drop. This usually gets better quickly. It usually happens within hours to a few days. These babies are often larger. They may need large amounts of *glucose* (sugar) in the early hours of life. Other uncommon forms of low blood sugar in infancy can occur. These may require more testing.

DIAGNOSIS

The signs and *symptoms* (problems) of low blood sugar in the infant are often varied. Some problems include feeding difficulties, jitteriness, a low body temperature, poor muscle tone, or periods when the breathing stops for a short time. Laboratory testing in these babies will show a low blood sugar. Testing may also show high insulin levels.

TREATMENT

Low blood sugars usually respond instantly to *intravenous* (into the vein) glucose. Medication that decreases the production of insulin are also used. You may have to increase your baby's feedings for a short period of time. The condition gets better on its own very shortly. This condition is common. It is generally no cause for concern.

Document Released: 03/26/2002 Document Re-Released: 09/26/2009
ExitCare® Patient Information ©2011 ExitCare, LLC.