

Hypoglycemia – The Great Masquerader

By Simon Yu, MD

If you are suffering from frequent headaches, irritability, mood swings, poor concentration, sugar cravings, weakness, or anxiety, you might be suffering from unsuspected hypoglycemia. Other symptoms include sweating, tremors, visual disturbance, extreme hunger, palpitation and rapid heart rate, syncope (brief loss of consciousness), seizures, and irrational behavior.

Chemical hypoglycemia is defined as a blood sugar of less than 50 mg/dl and not always symptomatic. True chemical hypoglycemia is not common except in diabetic patients on diabetic medications or insulin. However, mild hypoglycemia and sugar cravings are an epidemic health threat in industrialized countries.

Eating refined, super-sized, and nutrient-depleted food often triggers more sugar cravings, insulin regulation problems, and obesity. After eating a high caloric, “empty” meal, lethargy and hypoglycemia follow. For susceptible individuals, the multitude of hypoglycemic symptoms masquerade with a wrong diagnosis such as migraine headaches, candidiasis, anxiety, or panic disorder and are followed by an inappropriate treatment.

A Glucose Tolerance Test, performed in a physician’s office, is a medical test designed to rule out glucose intolerance and hypoglycemia as well as screen for pre-diabetic conditions. However, the test uses a high dose of glucose and often overlooks many highly sugar sensitive patients who react to only minor changes of blood glucose level. Seizures, syncope, and extreme irrational behavior can be triggered on highly sensitive individuals from only moderate blood sugar fluctuations.

Diet and a nutritional supplement program is the basic foundation for controlling hypoglycemia and its related symptoms. All refined sugar and carbohydrates including fruit juices and honey should be eliminated from the diet. Eat high protein snacks between meals. Follow a low carbohydrate diet such as the Zone diet by Barry Sears, Ph.D. or the South Beach diet by Arthur Agatston, MD.

The Zone diet or South Beach Diet is a good starting point for the majority of the population who are susceptible to hypoglycemia with insulin sensitivity. Nutritional supplements should include digestive enzymes, B-complex vitamins, and a full spectrum of anti-oxidants and trace minerals, especially chromium and vanadium. Gymnema leaf extract has been used effectively for hypoglycemia and pre-diabetic conditions.

Liver and adrenal dysfunctions, rather than pancreas and insulin dysregulations, are some of the most common hidden culprits causing sugar cravings and hypoglycemia. Mineral imbalance, especially of calcium, magnesium, sodium, and potassium, and chromium deficiency set the conditions for sugar sensitivity. Caffeinated beverages, alcohol, food allergies, and hidden infections can exacerbate sugar problems. Hypoglycemia and sugar cravings, some of the most common symptoms I see in my practice, disguise into many forms of physical complaints and are often ignored or mistreated. Hypoglycemia is truly a great masquerader.

Dr. Simon Yu, M.D. is a Board Certified Internist. He practices Internal Medicine with an emphasis on Alternative Medicine to use the best each has to offer. For more articles and information about alternative medicine as well as patient success stories visit his web site at www.preventionandhealing.com or call Prevention and Healing, Inc., 314-432-7802. You can also attend a free monthly discussion on Alternative Medicine at Prevention and Healing on the second Tuesday each month at 6:30 pm. Please call to verify the date and reserve your space.



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