

Type 2 diabetics warned on dangers of low blood sugar

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People with type two diabetes who suffer episodes of critically low blood sugar levels (severe hypoglycemia) are at greater risk of suffering subsequent vascular problems such as a heart attack, stroke and kidney disease, as well as non-vascular problems such as cancer and respiratory conditions, a new study has found.

Researchers at The George Institute for Global Health conducted a study involving 11,140 people with type two [diabetes](#) across 20 countries over the age of 55 years. The study, published in the [New England Journal of Medicine](#), is the first to show the link between a greater risk of suffering a wide range of life threatening illnesses after the experience of severe hypoglycemia.

Approximately 246 million people live with diabetes worldwide with type two being the most common form of diabetes, affecting 85 to 90 percent of all people with diabetes.

Dr. Sophia Zoungas, lead author of the paper says, "The study showed a strong link between severe hypoglycemic episodes and subsequent life threatening health problems such as [heart attack](#), stroke, [kidney disease](#) and digestive disorders. The study suggests that once severe hypoglycemia occurs it may be considered a marker of future vulnerability to serious conditions. Importantly, it was not able to show that severe hypoglycemia was the direct cause of the illnesses."

"Ultimately this research means two things for people with type two

diabetes; firstly, it's increasingly important to have a conversation with your doctor about how best to manage your diabetes to prevent hypoglycemia in the first instance. Secondly, once severe hypoglycemia has occurred doctors and those with diabetes should consider the possible underlying causes and adjust their [blood sugar](#) management where necessary to prevent further episodes and minimise future health risks", says Dr. Zoungas.

Provided by University of Sydney

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