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New REACT! Loss Prevention Posters Published on Diabetes



Emma Forbes-Gearey
Loss Prevention Officer

The Club has added two diabetes posters to the REACT! Series. The posters were created because of an increasing incidence of diabetes among personnel employed at sea.

In addition, studies have shown that seafarers tend to be more susceptible to active and passive negative lifestyle choices, such as smoking, not engaging in other physical activity beyond work, having unhealthy diet habits, and not getting enough sleep. These factors all increase seafarers' risk of developing diabetes.

The posters released address the following topics:

"Diabetes" – What is Diabetes? The signs and symptoms to look out for when someone is Hypoglycaemia or Hyperglycaemia.

"Diabetic Emergencies" – First steps to follow when someone is suffering from a diabetic emergency, then the preceding steps to follow when someone's blood sugar is lower or higher than normal.

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Diabetes

What is Diabetes?

Diabetes is a chronic medical condition where the body cannot create enough insulin or use it effectively. Insulin is a hormone produced by the pancreas, it regulates the blood sugar levels known as glucose. Overall, the body cannot maintain normal blood sugar levels.

Types of diabetes:
 Type 1 - Body's immune system attacks and destroys the cells that produce insulin.
 Type 2 - Body doesn't produce enough insulin, or body's cells do not react to insulin.

Treatment
 Can be treated by diet alone or with anti-diabetes tablets and/or injectable insulin.

Types of diabetic emergencies
 Normal fasting blood sugar levels are between 4-6 mmol/l. Fasting blood sugar levels outside of this range are abnormal and may lead to:

Hypoglycaemia

Blood sugar level gets too low. This is caused by missing a meal or too much insulin. Onset happens rapidly.

Hyperglycaemia

Blood sugar level gets too high because of an excess of starchy, sugary foods or too little insulin. Onset occurs gradually.

Signs and Symptoms

Hypoglycaemia

- Confusion and irrational behaviour
- Heart palpitations and rapid pulse
- Trembling or shaking
- Deteriorating level of response
- Pallor appearance, sweating, and clammy cold skin
- Faint, weak and possible hunger pains

If urgent action is not taken, then the patient will fall unconscious and may suffer from a seizure.

Hyperglycaemia

- Drowsiness, eventually leading to unconsciousness if not treated and diabetic coma
- Nausea and vomiting
- Urge to urinate
- Warm, dry skin
- Extreme thirst, breath will smell sweet and fruity
- Rapid breathing or hyperventilating and rapid pulse

It is rare for the patient to experience a diabetic coma as such extreme deterioration may take several days. For treatment of diabetic emergencies see poster - Diabetic Emergencies - Action Plan

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Diabetic Emergencies

First Steps

If you have a crew member on board who suffers from diabetes, the Master needs to know how they manage it and what medication they are taking. The following information is for people who are unaware that they are experiencing a diabetic emergency. As Hypoglycaemia and Hyperglycaemia are severe medical emergencies, call your designated telemedicine provider immediately. Assess the severity by:

Taking /accessing the patient's history

Examining the patient

If the patient has collapsed and is unconscious and not breathing, follow CPR - Rapid Action Plan

Action Plan

Hypoglycaemia
 Where blood sugar level is lower than normal.

What to do:

1. Call the designated telemedicine provider as soon as you suspect that the patient is hypoglycaemic (from signs/symptoms mentioned on the diabetes poster).
2. Help the patient sit down, give them something sugary, such as sugar lumps or sweets (approx. three pieces) or 150ml of fruit juice or a non-diet fizzy drink. If they are not fully alert, don't try to give them anything to eat or drink as they may choke.
3. If they improve, repeat step 2) and let them rest.
4. Once the diagnosis has been confirmed, contact RCC (Rescue Co-ordination Centre) for emergency evacuation.
5. In the meantime, continue monitoring the patient's breathing and their response signals. If they become unresponsive at any point, prepare to start CPR.

Hyperglycaemia
 Where blood sugar level is higher than normal.

What to do:

1. Call the designated telemedicine provider as soon as you suspect that the patient is hyperglycaemic (from signs/symptoms mentioned on the diabetes poster).
2. Once the diagnosis has been confirmed, contact RCC (Rescue Co-ordination Centre) for emergency evacuation.
3. In the meantime, continue monitoring the patient's breathing, pulse and their response signals. If they become unresponsive at any point, prepare to start CPR.

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Complimentary hard copies sets of the posters for the Members entered vessels may be obtained by contacting the Loss Prevention Department or downloading PDF files from the Club's resources page.