



Take Good Care of Yourself When You Are Sick!

It is important that every person with diabetes has a plan for how to take care of his/her diabetes during illness.

Illnesses, surgery, infection, injury, or strong emotions can make your blood glucose go up and cause your diabetes to get out of control. This happens because during illness or stress you need more energy to heal and get well. Stress hormones cause the liver to put stored sugar into your bloodstream to provide you with extra fuel. Normally, your body would produce extra insulin to use this fuel, but with diabetes, this does not work. Your blood sugar can go up, even if you are not eating!

Your diabetes may get out of control if:

- ❖ you get the flu
- ❖ you have a fever
- ❖ you have an infection
- ❖ you are having an emotional crisis
- ❖ you have a physical injury or pain
- ❖ you have dental problems
- ❖ you have had surgery



What should you do?

Your health care provider can help you decide what to do.

Keep an eye on your blood glucose

- ❖ Check your blood glucose 4 times a day (before your usual meals and at bedtime) while glucose levels are high and/or until your symptoms are gone.
- ❖ Write down blood glucose results in your logbook. Have this information handy if you need to call your health care provider.
- ❖ If you take insulin, your health care provider may also want you to check your urine for ketones several times a day.

Drink lots of fluids

- ❖ Drink at least 8 ounces (1 cup) of fluids every hour while you are awake. High blood sugars can cause you to become dehydrated.

Take your medications

- ❖ The stress of being sick can raise your blood glucose, even if you are not eating.
- ❖ If you take diabetes pills to control your blood glucose, take your usual dose.
- ❖ If you take insulin, your health care provider can help you decide whether you will need additional insulin during your illness.
- ❖ Even if you usually take diabetes pills, you may require some insulin until you are over your illness.
- ❖ Some over the counter medications and prescription medicines, along with herbal therapies, can further increase blood glucose levels.



What if you don't feel like eating?

If you cannot eat your normal meals:

- ❖ Try some soft foods that are easy on the stomach.
- ❖ Try and eat the same amount of carbohydrates that you do when you are not sick.
- ❖ Try smaller more frequent meals.
- ❖ If you are sick to your stomach, try taking small sips of fluids every 10 - 15 minutes. You may need to drink some fluids with carbohydrate to make up for not eating. This will depend on how high your blood sugar is.



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For blood glucose levels:

- ❖ Over 250 mg/dl – Drink carbohydrate-free, caffeine-free liquids in place of a meal.
- ❖ 180-250 mg/dl – Drink some liquid that contains 15 grams of carbohydrate in place of a meal. In addition, you will need additional liquid from water or other carb-free choice.
- ❖ Under 180 mg/dl – Try to drink or eat usual mealtime carbohydrate amounts. If vomiting occurs after insulin administration, you may need to sip on apple juice, or regular soda every 20 to 30 minutes to maintain a blood glucose of 100 to 180 mg/dl.
- ❖ If vomiting continues, eat or drink 15 grams of carbohydrates and check blood sugar again in 15 minutes.
- ❖ Low blood sugar (hypoglycemia) is rare, but it could occur with nausea and vomiting of short duration without fever.

Foods and liquids that contain 15 grams of carbohydrates you can use to plan your sick day diet:

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| ½ cup apple juice | 1 cup yogurt (not frozen), artificially sweetened or plain |
| ½ cup regular soft drink (not diet) | Milk shake (½ cup low fat milk and ¼ cup ice cream) |
| 1 slice dry toast | 1 double-stick popsicle |
| ½ cup cooked cereal | 1 cup milk |
| 6 saltine crackers | ½ cup fruit juice |
| ½ cup frozen yogurt | ½ cup sugar free pudding |
| 1 cup Gatorade sports drink | ½ cup mashed potatoes |
| 3 graham crackers | 5 vanilla wafers |
| ½ cup regular ice cream | 4 lifesavers |
| ¼ cup sherbet | ½ cup mashed potatoes |
| ¼ cup regular pudding | 1 cup noodle or rice soup |
| ½ cup regular gelatin/Jell-O | |

Call your health care provider (phone # _____) if :

- ❖ You have a fever over 101
- ❖ You cannot keep food or liquid down for more than 4 to 6 hours
- ❖ You have diarrhea that lasts for more than 6 hours
- ❖ Your blood sugars are over 300 for a few readings, or over 250 for a day
- ❖ You are not sure how to take your medications
- ❖ You are vomiting and unable to eat or drink for over 4 hours
- ❖ You are sick longer than 24 hours



Here is some good information to have on hand when you call your health care provider:

- ❖ Your name and age
- ❖ How long you've had diabetes
- ❖ Name of diabetes doctor
- ❖ Present problem (temperature, number of times you have vomited or had diarrhea)
- ❖ Blood sugar and ketone levels for last 24 to 48 hrs.
- ❖ Intake of foods and liquids
- ❖ Usual insulin dosage or other diabetes medications, time and amount of last dosage

Signs and symptoms that require clinic or hospital treatment by a healthcare professional:

- ❖ Continued vomiting or being unable to keep fluids down
- ❖ Continued diarrhea and progressive weakness or dizziness
- ❖ Inability to concentrate
- ❖ Low blood sugar that does not come up after treatment



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Sick Day Supplies

It is a good idea to have these things on hand in case of illness so you don't have to worry about going to the store when you are not feeling well.

- ❖ Thermometer
- ❖ Medicine to help with symptoms - ask your health care provider which are the best choices for you to use:
 - Diarrhea _____
 - Nausea (suppositories are best) _____
 - Pain _____
 - Cough _____
 - Congestion _____
 - Fever _____
- ❖ Important phone numbers (health care provider and a friend or family member that can help you when you are sick)
- ❖ Measuring cup (to measure enough to drink)
- ❖ Back up test strips
- ❖ Urine Ketone strips (if advised by your health care provider)
- ❖ Glucose tablets
- ❖ Pencil and paper