

Illness and Sick Days



Being ill can cause your blood glucose levels to be higher or lower than normal. It is important to be prepared since high levels can lead to life-threatening conditions such as severe dehydration or coma.

When To Call Your Health Care Team

During an illness you may need to call your physician if you:

- Are sick or have had a fever for several days and are not getting better.
- Have blood glucose levels over 240 mg/dL.
- Have moderate or large amounts of ketones in your urine.
- Have had vomiting or diarrhea for 6 hours.
- Have abdominal pain, trouble breathing, chest discomfort, dry lips or tongue or a fruity smell to your breath.

Sick Day Plan

Talk to your diabetes team **BEFORE** you become ill to develop a sick day plan. Having this plan in place will help you manage your diabetes when you are ill.

Glucose testing

People who have type 1 diabetes should test their blood glucose every 4 hours when they are sick. If you have type 2 diabetes, testing your blood glucose levels 4 times each day may be enough.



Ketone testing

If you are not able to use glucose for energy then your body will burn fat for energy. Burning fat can cause a buildup of acids (ketones) in the blood, which can be dangerous. If you have type 1 diabetes you should check your urine for ketones every 4 hours while ill. People who have type 2 diabetes should check their urine for ketones if their blood glucose level is over 300 mg/dL.

Ketone test strips can be purchased at the pharmacy without a prescription. Follow the directions for the correct method of testing. It is important that the strips are not outdated.

Fluids

When blood glucose levels are high, you will urinate more. If you do not replace fluids, you can become dehydrated. Take frequent sips of calorie-free, caffeine-free liquids such as water, diet soda, sugar-free gelatin, or broth. Drink at least 6 – 8 ounces every hour.



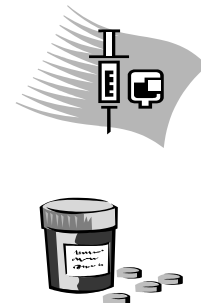
Food

If possible, follow your regular meal plan. If you cannot eat solid food, try to have about 50 grams of carbohydrates every three to four hours. The following foods and beverages contain approximately 15 grams of carbohydrate and are good for sick-day use.

- ½ cup regular gelatin
- ½ cup ice cream
- ½ cup apple juice
- 1 cup broth soup with noodles or rice
- ¼ cup sherbet
- ½ cup cooked cereal
- 6 saltine crackers
- 1 twin Popsicle
- ½ cup regular soda

Medications

Illness can cause your blood glucose levels to be higher so it is important that you take all of your diabetes medications when sick. If you take insulin, talk with your physician to see if you need to take extra during your illness. People who take oral medications for type 2 diabetes may need insulin for a short time if their blood glucose levels are too high.



Be cautious about taking over-the-counter medications. Talk to your pharmacist since some of these can affect your blood glucose levels.

Where to learn more?

Visit our website: www.dagc.org and our Aronoff Library and Resource Center, from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Monday through Friday.



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