

Sick Days and Type 1 Diabetes

Blood sugars can be hard to manage during times of illness. They may be lower or higher than usual. The most important thing is to continue taking some insulin regularly.



How to handle sick days

- **Continue to take some insulin. This is very important.**

Monitor your blood sugar at least every 4 hours around the clock

- If you think you are dehydrated, you may need to stop some other medications temporarily. Talk to your doctor.
- Drink plenty of fluids to prevent dehydration.
- Eat your usual meals if you can. If you cannot, take small amounts of carbohydrate every hour.
 - Fruit juice or regular pop
 - Regular Jell-O®
 - Popsicle
 - Sports drinks
 - Soda crackers or dry toast
- Ask your pharmacist about safe, sugar-free cold remedies.

When you are sick and blood sugars are low

- You must still take some insulin, even if not eating, to avoid Diabetic Ketoacidosis.
- You may need to reduce your long acting/basal insulin by ½ .
- You may need less rapid acting/bolus insulin if you are not eating at all.
- You may reduce your usual correction doses of rapid acting insulin by ½ as well.
- Aim for at least ½ of your usual insulin in 24 hours.
- **For very small children with very small doses, you may need to call the paediatrician for advice.**

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If low & vomiting – Unconscious, follow **Emergency Glucagon** handout.
– Conscious follow **Mini-dose Rescue Glucagon** handout.

- Check for ketones
 - If ketones are trace to moderate in urine or less than 3 mmol/L, continue giving reduced doses of usual insulin and take small amounts of carbohydrate (as above).
 - If ketones are large in urine, more than 3 mmol/L by blood meter or you are vomiting excessively, you should go to the emergency room for IV fluids and glucose.
- **Recovery**

After a flu-like illness, total recovery may take a few weeks. You may have lost weight and have a poor appetite. Your insulin needs may stay lower during this time. Continue to monitor your blood sugars and slowly increase your insulin to your usual doses.

When you are sick and blood sugars are high

- Check for ketones – The presence of ketones with high blood sugar lets you know that your body is running low on insulin and you may need medical help.
 - If ketones are trace to moderate in urine or less than 3 mmol/L by blood meter, give a rapid acting insulin correction dose. This dose may need to be increased by 10-20% in the presence of ketones.
 - Recheck the blood sugar and ketones every 2-4 hours to see the effect of the insulin.
 - If illness and high blood sugars persist for more than a day, you may need to increase your long acting/basal insulin too (by about 10-20%).
 - For example:
 - If your dose is 5 units, you could increase to 5.5 or 6 units.
 - If your dose is 12 units, you could increase to 13 or 14 units.
 - **For very small children with very small doses, you may need to call the paediatrician for advice.**

If blood sugar is high and ketones are:

- **Large in urine, or**
- **Above 3 mmol/L by blood ketone meter, or**
- **You are vomiting**

Go to the Emergency Room

Insulin Pump Users Note:

See *High Blood Sugar Management and DKA Prevention for Insulin Pumpers*

Prepare a sick day kit that may include:

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- Instructions for insulin
 - Carbohydrate containing fluids
 - Sugar-free drinks (diet pop)
 - Broth soups
 - Treatment for low blood sugars (juice, honey, glucose tablets)
 - Extra blood sugar test strips
 - Ketone test strips – blood or urine
 - Glucagon kit
 - Mini-dose rescue glucagon guidelines if appropriate
 - Insulin syringes for:
 - Mini-dose rescue glucagon if appropriate, or
 - Insulin injections if on an insulin pump
 - Sugar-free cold or flu medications (check with your pharmacist)
 - Anti-nausea or pain medications (check with your pharmacist or doctor)
 - Thermometer
 - Copy of your insulin pump settings if applicable
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Notes:

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