



Sick Day Management for people with Type Two Diabetes



Waikato Regional Diabetes Service



When you are sick

It is helpful to follow a sick day management plan when you feel unwell, notice signs of illness, and/or your blood glucose levels are greater than 15mmol/L on two consecutive readings across an 8 - 12 hour period.

What happens when you are sick?

Infections, surgery, trauma, major stress and other illnesses can affect your blood glucose levels. When you are sick, your appetite changes and you may not eat what you normally would eat. All of these things make your diabetes harder to manage when you are sick.

- When you are sick, the stress on your body causes blood glucose levels to increase even if you are not able to eat or drink anything.
- When you are sick, high blood glucose levels can make you dehydrated.
- When you are sick, it is important to recognise signs and symptoms of poorly controlled diabetes early and seek medical help early.

Get support and help

It can be difficult to manage your diabetes on your own when you are sick. It is important to:

- let a family member or friend know you are sick
- ask them to check in on you during the day and night
- get medical help early in the course of your illness if you are unable to follow a management plan (see below).

Things you will need when you are sick:

- Blood glucose meter and test strips.
- If you are on insulin - an insulin pen/needle or syringe.
- Something to eat.
- Sugar-free drinks **AND** sugar drinks.

Sick Day Management

This involves managing your food and fluids, monitoring, possible changes to your medications, managing lows and when to seek help.

Management plan:

- If you are vomiting and not eating or drinking enough, you can quickly become dehydrated.
- Sip at least one glass of **sugar free** drink every hour - see suggestions on page 4.
- Have some **food to eat** each hour that will provide energy - see some suggestions on the page 4.

Frequent monitoring

- Check blood glucose levels at least two to four hourly, or more frequently if your blood glucose levels are getting low.

When you are unwell, it is useful to keep a record of:

- your blood glucose levels
- the medications you have taken
- your fluid and food intake
- your temperature.

Diabetes medications

- If you are not eating the same quantity of food and/or are vomiting, your diabetes medication may need adjustment. It is important to contact your doctor or nurse for advice.
- Metformin should always be stopped if you are vomiting, have diarrhoea and/or not eating your food.
- If you use insulin, the doses may need to be changed. Please contact your doctor or nurse for advice.

Management of hypoglycaemic events (low blood sugar)

- During illness when you are not eating or are vomiting, your blood glucose may fall below 4 mmol/L.
- Treat your low blood glucose with sweet (sugar) drinks like juice or fizzy.
- Use the 'Hypoglycaemia' handout to guide you.

Seek medical advice if you:

- cannot keep your blood glucose above 4 mmol/L
- are too sick to follow your plan, or have no support person available
- have blood glucose levels that remain above 15 mmol for more than 24 hours
- are passing lots of urine
- have abdominal pain
- are nauseous, vomiting or have diarrhoea for more than 12 hours
- feel drowsy and weak
- feel confused
- have chest pain
- have leg cramps
- feel your pulse is rapid
- have difficulty breathing.

Sugar free drinks - have at least one glass (200ml) every hour

- Water / mineral water
- Sugar free soft drinks
- Tomato juice
- Oxo / Bovril drink
- Maggi stock drink

Food to provide energy/carbohydrate 15 grams

- Every hour have a drink or light meal which provides 15 grams carbohydrate
- 150ml (3/4 cup) fruit or orange juice
- 150ml (3/4 cup) soft drink containing sugar
- 200ml (1 cup) milk + 2 teaspoon Milo
- 200ml (1 cup) soup and 1 slice toast
- 150gram (1 pottle) fruit yoghurt
- 4 - 6 water crackers
- 2 - 3 plain biscuits
- 1 slice dry toast
- 8 - 10 rice crackers
- 1/2 cup ordinary jelly
- 1 small banana

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