

Sick Day Management for Type 2 Diabetes

Fraser Health Diabetes Health Centres

A bad cold, the flu or a serious injury can make your blood glucose too high. People not usually taking insulin may need to take insulin when they are sick. On the other hand when you take diabetes medication (pills and/or injections) and cannot eat your usual foods, your blood glucose may go too low. **Follow these guidelines to help you stay out of hospital:**

- Be prepared – before you get sick, ask your pharmacist how you can test for “ketones” if you do become sick.
- Continue to take your type 2 medication, or insulin, as usual.
- Continue to follow your meal plan. If you are unable to eat your usual foods, try to follow the **Foods for Sick Days** ideas in the next section.
- Drink plenty of sugar-free fluids such as water, weak or caffeine-free tea and sugar-free pop. Try to drink at least 8 to 10 cups of fluids each day.
- If you test your blood glucose, test 4 times each day (before meals and before bed)
- If your blood glucose is greater than 20 mmol/L for more than 8 hours you need to test your urine or blood for ketones.

See your doctor today or go to emergency for help if one of the following occurs:

- Your blood glucose is greater than 20 mmol/L for more than 8 hours; and your urine ketones are moderate to large or blood ketones are 1.5 mmol/L or higher.
- You take type 2 medication and/or insulin and are unable to eat or drink due to vomiting.
- You are unable to eat or drink due to vomiting for longer than 24 hours. You need to drink 8 cups or 2 litres of fluid in 24 hours.
- You have diarrhea lasting longer than 24 hours.

What may happen when your blood glucose is high?

You may become dehydrated. Dehydration can cause an increase in blood glucose and may lead to shock and coma.

Foods for Sick Days

Drink plenty of sugar-free fluids such as water, weak or caffeine-free tea, sugar-free pop, Crystal light® or broth. Try to drink 8 to 10 cups of fluid per day.

Continue to eat your usual foods as much as possible. If you are not able to eat your usual foods, have one of the following every 1 to 2 hours, even if your blood glucose is high. (Each of these servings contain about 15 grams of carbohydrate.)

- ½ cup (125 mL) fruit juice
- ½ cup (125 mL) regular pop (not sugar-free)
- 1 cup (250 mL) Gatorade®
- ½ cup (125 mL) regular Jell-O®
- 1 twin popsicle
- 1 cup (250 mL) milk or yogurt
- 1 cup (250 mL) cream soup
- ½ cup (125 mL) ice cream, custard or pudding
- 6 soda crackers
- 1 slice toast with margarine/butter/jam
- ½ cup (125 mL) applesauce
- ½ cup (125 mL) milk shake or liquid meal replacement