

Sick Day Guidelines for Type 2 Diabetes

Any type of illness can raise blood sugar (glucose). Even if you are not able to eat or drink, blood sugars tend to rise. This handout describes what to do.

Causes of High Blood Sugars

- Any illness, infection, surgery
- Missed or skipped insulin or diabetes oral medicine
- Physical or emotional stress
- Some medicines

Symptoms of High Blood Sugars

Symptom	Cause
Urinating more	This is the body's way of getting rid of extra sugar.
Thirsty	This is because the body needs fluid.
Dehydrated	Excess fluid is lost to get rid of sugar. This happens more with vomiting and diarrhea.
Very Tired	The body is not getting enough insulin to turn sugar into energy.

Checking Blood Sugars When Sick

If you get sick with a cold or flu or if you have an infection, you may need to check your blood sugars as often as every two hours. Stay in close contact with your health care team during these times.

Prevent Dehydration

- Drink at least 4 ounces (1/2 cup) of fluids every 30 minutes.
- With vomiting and diarrhea, your body loses electrolytes like potassium and sodium. Replace these losses with bouillon, soups, sports drinks, and juices.

Eating/ Drinking When Not Feeling Well

If you cannot eat your normal meals, eat foods and/or drink fluids with 15 grams of carbohydrates (juice, popsicles, sports drinks, crackers, toast, etc.) every hour. Drink extra calorie-free fluids in between and when glucose levels are 250 mg/dL or higher.

Adjust Medicines

Adjust your medicines as follows or as your health care team has advised.

- **Oral medicines (pills):**
 - **If you are able to eat**, you may keep taking your diabetes pills.
 - **If you are not able to eat**, stop taking your diabetes pills.
- **Injectable diabetes medicine:** Stop taking these medicines until you are able to eat.
- **Insulin:** Your doses may change when you are sick. See next section to learn more.

Insulin Plan When Eating

- Take your usual dose of long-acting insulin (NPH, Basaglar[®], Lantus[®], Toujeo[®], Tresiba[®], or pre-mixed insulin such as 70/30, 75/25, or 50/50).
- Keep taking your mealtime (short or rapid-acting) insulin.
- Use correction insulin. Call your health care team to decide if your doses need to be changed while you are sick.
- If you use an insulin pump, talk with your care team about what changes are needed. Take your usual correction per the pump bolus calculator.

Insulin Plan When Not Eating

It is always best to discuss insulin changes with your health care team. See below for common changes when not eating your usual meals.

- NPH: Take $\frac{1}{2}$ of usual dose.
- Basaglar[®], Lantus[®], Toujeo[®], or Tresiba[®]: Take usual dose.
- Regular, Novolog[®], Apidra[®], Humalog[®], Admelog[®]: Do not take meal insulin. Only use your correction scale.
- Pre-mixed insulin (70/30, 75/25, 50/50): Take $\frac{1}{2}$ of usual dose and call your health care team for direction.
- U-500: Call your health care team for direction.

When to Call

- Blood sugar 300 mg/dL or higher for 6 hours or more
- Vomiting or diarrhea for 6 hours
- Unable to drink fluids
- Not sure how to adjust your diabetes medicine

Your health care team may have given you this information as part of your care. If so, please use it and call if you have any questions. If this information was not given to you as part of your care, please check with your doctor. This is not medical advice. This is not to be used for diagnosis or treatment of any medical condition. Because each person's health needs are different, you should talk with your doctor or others on your health care team when using this information. If you have an emergency, please call 911. Copyright © 4/2024. University of Wisconsin Hospitals and Clinics Authority. All rights reserved. Produced by the Department of Nursing. HF#4307.