



# Sick Day Management

Knowing what to do when you are sick is important in people with diabetes to avoid hospitalization. Discuss what to do about sickness/illness with your doctor before you get sick. The following are general guidelines. They may not be appropriate for everyone.

## What to Eat and Drink When You are Sick

**Drink 4 to 8 ounces ( $\frac{1}{2}$  - 1 cup) of fluid every one to two hours.**

- Drink extra liquid to prevent dehydration.**
- Calorie-free, caffeine-free liquids are best (water, diet pop, broth).**
- If unable to eat, drink  $\frac{1}{3}$  to  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup of juice or regular pop.**
- Drink liquids that contain salt and electrolytes (sports drinks) every 3 hours to prevent persistent ketoacidosis.**

**Try to eat your regular meals. If blood sugars are high, eat slightly smaller meals.**

- If having difficulty eating, eat or drink 15 grams of carbohydrate every hour or 45 grams carbohydrate every 3 to 4 hours.**
- Soft foods (soup, pudding, regular gelatin) may be easier to eat. The following foods contain about 15 grams of carbohydrate:**

1 slice toast	3 squares graham crackers	1 cup milk
$\frac{1}{3}$ cup rice	$\frac{1}{2}$ cup mashed potatoes	$\frac{1}{2}$ cup cereal
5 vanilla wafers	$\frac{1}{2}$ cup applesauce	$\frac{1}{2}$ cup juice
$\frac{1}{2}$ cup pudding	$\frac{1}{2}$ cup ice cream/yogurt	1 cup soup
8 oz Gatorade®	$\frac{1}{2}$ cup canned fruit	6 saltines
1 popsicle	$\frac{1}{2}$ cup regular gelatin	$\frac{1}{4}$ cup sherbet

## Other Considerations When Sick:

Take insulin or diabetes medication as you usually do. **DO NOT** take metformin (Glucophage) if vomiting.

If you take insulin, extra is often needed when sick. If vomiting and diarrhea are present, less insulin may be needed. Discuss this with your health care provider and diabetes educator before you get sick.

Those not normally on insulin, may need insulin during times of illness.

Test blood sugars often (every 1 to 4 hours). All people with diabetes should test their blood sugars at home when sick, even if they do not monitor at home regularly.

Test urine or blood ketones if blood sugars are over 250 mg/dl (type 1 diabetes).

### Tips for Nausea/Vomiting:

1. **Blood glucose over 250 mg/dl:**  
Drink calorie-free, caffeine-free liquids in place of meal. Include salty liquids (broth, boullion).
2. **Blood glucose 180 - 250 mg/dl:**  
Drink/eat 15 grams carbohydrate in place of meal (See list on front page).  
Drink additional liquid from calorie-free, caffeine-free sources.
3. **Blood glucose under 180 mg/dl:**  
Try to drink/eat usual mealtime carbohydrate amount.  
If vomiting occurs after insulin is taken, may need to sip sugar water, regular pop, popsicle or juice every 20-30 minutes to maintain blood sugars of 100-180 mg/dl.
4. **Blood glucose under 100 mg/dl and vomiting persists:**  
May require hospitalization.

### When to Call Your Doctor:

1. Fever greater than 100 degrees for 24 hours that doesn't improve with acetaminophen (Tylenol).
2. High blood glucose (over 300 mg/dl) that do not improve with additional insulin and fluids.
3. Moderate to large urine ketones or blood ketones > 0.6 mmol/L.
4. Diarrhea more than 5 times OR diarrhea for more than 6 hours.
5. Vomiting and unable to keep fluid down for more than 4 hours.
6. Severe abdominal pain, difficulty breathing,
7. Other unexplained symptoms. If in doubt, call your doctor.

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