

Sick Day Management for People with Type 2 Diabetes

When you are unwell, managing your glucose levels can be a challenge. Be prepared and know how to manage your diabetes when you are sick.

Important reminders

1. **Check your glucose level** every 4 hours or as recommended by your health care team. Target glucose levels can be a little “relaxed” when sick.
2. If not eating well and at risk of dehydration, until you are feeling better, do not take metformin, SGLT2-I (Jardiance, Forxiga, Invokana) –visit www.diabetes.ca (search ‘sick day medication list’)
3. **Continue to take your meal time insulin.** Often extra meal time insulin is needed especially if your glucose levels are high.

Create a sick day management plan CHECKLIST:

- Keep all your written instructions in an easily accessible place (e.g. on fridge)
- Prepare all your supplies (back up insulin pens, glucagon, glucose meter and strips etc.)
- Have a readily available supply of sugar containing clear fluids
- Write out a plan with how much extra insulin to take when sugar levels are high
- Keep a list of contact information for your diabetes team, family doctor, endocrinologist on call, telehealth Ontario and ambulance (911)

If you have Type 2 diabetes and you are on insulin

1. **Insulin treatment should never be stopped. If you are not eating anything at a meal, you should not take your usual rapid acting insulin dose. Continue to take your long-acting insulin.**
2. Make sure you are drinking fluids if you are unable to keep down solid food (see list below).
3. Glucose levels should be checked at least every four hours.
4. When ill, extra insulin might be necessary as glucose levels may rise even if you are unable to eat or drink normally.

Table 1: Type 2 Diabetes how to increase insulin doses (sick days only)

Glucose level 10-16 mmol/L	Increase usual dose of rapid-acting insulin by 10%	e.g. usual dose 10 units will add 1 = 11 units
Glucose level 16.1-20 mmol/L	Increase usual dose of rapid-acting insulin by 20%	e.g. usual dose 10 units will add 2 = 12 units
Glucose level > 20 mmol/L	Increase usual dose of rapid-acting insulin by 20% and check glucose level every 2-3 hours	e.g. usual dose 10 units Add 2 units = 12 units

When to ask for help?

- If your glucose level lower than 4 mmol/L for 2 consecutive readings and does not respond to hypoglycemia treatment.
- If your glucose level stays higher than 14 mmol/L for 2 or more readings and does not respond to increased insulin and fluids.
- If you have been told to check your ketones and they are moderate to high or high.
- If you do not know how to adjust your insulin.
- If you have been sick for 2 days and are not getting better
- If you have symptoms of dehydration, such as dry mouth, extreme thirst, little to no urination or darker urine than usual.
- If you are taking diabetes medication and/or insulin and you are unable to eat or drink.

Call an ambulance if you have chest pain, difficulty breathing, have lost consciousness or are unable to treat a low glucose on your own.

Dietary recommendations

- Drink plenty of fluids to stay hydrated. High glucose levels, illness, vomiting, diarrhea and fever may cause dehydration.
- It is important to follow your usual meal plan if possible. Your body needs carbohydrates for energy and to balance with your medications and/or insulin.
- You may need to choose lighter foods that provide about the same amount of carbohydrates as your missed meals or snack(s).
- If you are unable to follow your usual meal plan, have one serving of carbohydrate containing food/fluids; e.g. 15 grams of carbohydrate (or 1 Carb Choice) every hour while awake.
- **If your glucose level is more than 14 mmol/L**, consider having sugar-free fluids.

Carbohydrate containing fluids/foods: 15g of carbohydrates or 1 carb choice

- 2/3 cup regular soft drink (not diet, avoid caffeinated drinks)
- 2/3 cup fruit juice
- 1 twin popsicle
- ½ cup prepared Jell-O™, flavoured gelatin or jelly powder (not diet)
- 1 cup sports drink
- 1 cup chicken noodle soup or cream soup*
- ½ cup cooked cereal
- ½ cup plain ice cream*, custard*, pudding*, apple sauce
- 1 slice toast
- 7 soda crackers
- ½ cup flavoured yogurt*

*(consider limiting milk products if vomiting or diarrhea)

Sugar-free fluids:

- Water
- Any no sugar added liquid/powder water enhancer (i.e. Crystal Light™)
- Clear soup or broth
- Diet soft drink
- Tea