



Managing Sick Days for Type 1 Diabetes

1. Contact the Diabetes Program if you have questions about your diabetes management. We are here to help!
2. Take your insulin as prescribed. If you are at risk of being dehydrated with vomiting or diarrhea, it is recommended to stop certain diabetes medications. A list is included in this package. It is a good idea to discuss this with your health care team in advance.
3. Check your blood glucose every 2-4 hours, 24 hours a day. Keep accurate records.
4. Check your ketones every time you urinate or every 4 hours if using blood ketone testing.
5. Drink plenty of fluids and eat well-tolerated foods. Aim for 1 cup (8 ounces) of calorie-free fluids every hour while you are awake to prevent dehydration.
6. Be careful with over-the-counter medicines. If you have a cold or the flu, and are considering using a cold remedy or cough syrup, ask your pharmacist to help you make a good choice. Since many cold remedies and cough syrups contain sugar, try to pick a sugar-free product.

Drink Extra Fluids

The following is a list of carbohydrate-free (sugar-free) fluids:

- Water
- Diet ginger ale or other diet soft drinks
- Clear tea or herbal tea
- Black coffee
- Broth
- Sugar free Jell-O
- Sugar free popsicles

These will keep you hydrated without providing any carbohydrate, so drink them as desired. You should drink 1 cup of fluid every hour, limiting the beverages that contain caffeine as this may cause you to become more dehydrated. If you are unable to keep fluids down, you may need to go to the Emergency Department.

If you can only drink fluids, you will need to drink 15 grams of carbohydrate-containing fluids each hour:

- 1/2 cup non-diet soft drink
- 1/2 cup fruit juice (orange, apple, pineapple, etc.)
- 1/3 cup grape or prune juice
- 3/4 cup Glucerna
- 1 cup milk
- 1 cup of Gatorade

Sick Day Diet

If you can't eat your regular foods, replace carbohydrate foods in your diet with well-tolerated, soft foods. You will need to replace the following foods:

- Milk and alternatives, such as yogurt
- Fruits, including fruit juice
- Grains and starches, such as potato, rice, cereal, breads and pasta

You will not need to replace meat, poultry, eggs, cheese or vegetables.

The following is a list of well-tolerated foods that contain 15 grams of carbohydrate and can replace one serving of milk and alternatives, fruits, grains and starches:

- 1/2 cup of sherbet or regular ice cream
- 1 regular popsicle
- 1 cup cream soup made with water
- 1/2 cup cream soup made with milk
- 1/2 cup sugar-free pudding
- 1 cup yogurt, plain or artificially sweetened
- 7 soda crackers
- 1/2 cup of regular Jell-O
- 1 slice of dry toast

When Should I Call my Health Care Provider?

When you have diabetes, sick days often involve more than just a runny nose and sneezing. Conditions that result in nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea can increase your blood glucose levels. Again, it's important to test your blood glucose levels when you are sick.

Call your Health Care Provider if:

- Your blood glucose stays higher than 14.0 mmol/L for two consecutive readings and does not respond to increased insulin and fluids
- Your blood glucose stays lower than 4.0 mmol/L for two consecutive readings and does not respond to hypoglycemia treatment
- You are unable to keep liquids or solids down
- You have a fever (temperature over 38.3 degrees Celsius)
- You have diarrhea or vomiting twice or more in 4 hours
- You have difficulty breathing
- You have moderate to large ketones
- You are unsure how much insulin/medication to take

It is important to be prepared. Have phone numbers ready before illness strikes. Having a “sick day” kit that includes a thermometer, sugar-free cough medicine/cough drops, and important phone numbers is a good idea.

Sick Day Medications for Type 1 Diabetes

When you are ill, particularly if you become dehydrated (e.g. vomiting or diarrhea), some medicines could cause your kidney function to worsen or result in side effects. If you become sick and are unable to drink enough fluid to keep hydrated, you should STOP the following medications:

- Sulfonylureas
- ACE-inhibitors
- Diuretics
- Angiotensin receptor blockers
- Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs [e.g. Aspirin/ASA, ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin), naproxen (Aleve), diclofenac (Voltaren), Celebrex]

Please be careful not to take non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs which are commonly found in pain medications (e.g. Advil) and cold remedies. Please check with the pharmacist before using over-the-counter medications and discuss all changes in medications with your health care provider.