



When to Call Your Diabetes Team:

- You've been sick or have had a fever for 2 to 3 days and aren't getting better
- Vomiting or diarrhea for *MORE THAN* 6 hours
- You test for moderate to large amounts of **KETONES** in your urine
- Glucose levels are *HIGHER* than 240 even after taking the extra insulin that is in your sick-day plan
- Even after taking pills for your diabetes your blood sugar level climbs to *MORE THAN* 240 before meals, and remains there for *MORE THAN* 24 hours
- You have symptoms that might signal diabetes ketoacidosis (*DKA*) or dehydration or some other serious condition

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Diabetes Education

*Being sick can make your blood glucose (sugar) level go up very HIGH. Planning what you do when you don't feel well is the best way to prevent a minor illness from becoming a major problem. The **American Diabetes Association** recommends having a plan of action for sick days ahead of time. Then when you become sick, you will be ready, and can feel secure because you will already know what to do.*



Sick Day Plan

What Happens When Your Sick?

When you're sick, your body is under stress. Your body's normal response to this stress is to release **HORMONES** that help fight disease. It is normal for these hormones to raise blood sugar. Another side effect of this increase in hormones is that they could interfere with the blood sugar-lowering effects of insulin.

As a result, when you are sick, it is harder to keep your blood sugar in your target range. Diabetic ketoacidosis leading to a diabetic coma can develop, particularly in people with type 1 diabetes. A similar condition that has almost the same symptoms but does not make ketones (*hyperosmolar hyperglycemic state*) might occur in people with type 2 diabetes, especially older people. Both conditions are dangerous and can be life-threatening.

Be Ready to Tell Your Doctor:

- What medicines you've taken and how much
- How long you've been sick
- Whether you can eat and keep food down
- Whether you've lost weight
- What's your temperature, blood sugar and urine ketone levels



To be prepared, keep written records of all these things as soon as you become sick.

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Keep Your Log Book Handy:

CHECK your blood sugar and urine ketones *MORE* frequently no matter what kind of diabetes you have.

Know Your ABC's of Diabetes:

(Reach Your GOALS)

A ✓ EVERY 3-6 MONTHS

- **A1c:** Below 7%

B ✓ EVERY VISIT

- **Blood Pressure:** Below 130/80mmHg

C ✓ ONCE A YEAR

- **Cholesterol:**
LDL: Below 100mg/dL
HDL: Above 40mg/dL for Men & Above 50mg/dL for Women

⊙ Blood Glucose Targets:

- Fasting, 90-130mg/dL
- 2 Hours after eating, Less Than 180mg/dL

Sick Day Plan

What's In a Sick Day Plan?

First, it's very **IMPORTANT** to prepare it in advance. Work with your doctor or a diabetes educator. **The plan includes:**

- When to call your diabetes team
- How often to measure blood sugar and urine ketones
- What medicines to take
- How to eat
- List of phone numbers for your doctor, diabetes educator and dietitian. Know how to reach them at night, on weekends and holidays

Keep Your Log Book Handy:

Check your blood sugar and urine ketones *MORE* frequently no matter what kind of diabetes you have.

For Type 1:

- Check blood sugar and urine ketones **EVERY** four hours
- Measuring ketones is very important because the waste products are more likely to build up when you are sick and lead to diabetic ketoacidosis
- Make sure you have a glucose meter.

For Type 2:

- Checking your blood sugar four times a day is usually enough
- If your blood sugar is **HIGHER** than 300, you should check your urine for ketones
- Make sure you have a glucose meter.

Make sure you have a glucose meter. If you don't have one, **TALK** to your diabetes educator about getting one.



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Diabetes Education

Sick Day Plan

Remember:

It's **IMPORTANT** to stick to your normal meal plan if you can. This can help your blood sugars from increasing further.

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Diabetes Medicines:

- **CONTINUE** taking medicine for your diabetes.
- Even if you are throwing up, **DON'T STOP** your medicines. You need them because your body makes extra glucose (*sugar*) when you are sick.
- **If you have type 1 diabetes**, you may have to take extra insulin to bring down the higher blood sugar levels.
- **If you have type 2 diabetes**, you may be able to take your pills, or you may need to use insulin for a short time.
- Your diabetes team will work with you on how to manage your diabetes medications for sick days.

Continue taking medicine →
for your diabetes.



What Do I Eat?

It's important to stick to your normal meal plan if you can.

Here Are Some Helpful Tips:

- ✓ Drink lots of non-caloric liquids to keep from getting dehydrated. These are liquids like water and diet soft drinks.
- ✓ Drinking extra fluids will also help get rid of the extra sugar (*and possibly, ketones*) in your blood.
- ✓ If you can't stick to your normal meal plan, your sick-day plan should contain a meal plan. **Here are a few suggestions:**
 - Try to take in your normal number of calories with foods that are easy on the stomach like regular (*non-diet*) gelatin, crackers, soups and applesauce.
 - If even these mild foods are too hard to eat, you may have to get your calories by drinking liquids or almost liquids that contain carbohydrates.

↪ • Aim for 50 grams of carbohydrate *EVERY* three to four hours.
(See Quick Sick Day Carbohydrate Choices on the next page.)



Quick Sick-Day Carbohydrate Choices:

These drinks and foods contain between 10 and 15 grams of carbohydrates:

Fluids:

- 1 double-stick popsicle
- 1 cup Gatorade
- 1 cup milk
- 1 cup soup
- ½ cup fruit juice
- ½ cup regular soft drink
(*not diet*)

Foods:

- 6 saltines
- 5 vanilla wafers
- 4 Lifesavers
- 3 graham crackers
- 1 slice dry toast (*not light bread*)
- ½ cup cooked cereal
- 1/3 cup frozen yogurt
- ½ cup regular ice cream
- ½ cup sugar-free pudding
- ½ cup regular (*not sugar-free*) Jell-O
- ½ cup custard
- ½ cup mashed potatoes
- ¼ cup sherbet
- ¼ cup regular pudding

From "Diabetes Care When You're Sick," by Rachel Gifford, RN, MSN, CDE, and Belinda P. Childs, ARNP, MN, BD-ADM, CDE, Diabetes Forecast, February 2005, page 46

Sick Day Plan

Medicine Lookout:

Some medicines you take when you are sick might raise your blood sugar even if they are sugar free. **ALWAYS** check the label of over-the-counter medicines before you buy them to see if they have sugar. Small doses of medicines with sugar are usually ok.



To be on the safe side, ask the pharmacist or your diabetes team about sugar-free medicines.

Some medicines to watch for are aspirin, decongestants and some cold remedies. Some antibiotics lower blood sugar levels in people with type 2 diabetes who take diabetes pills.

If you must go to the emergency room or see a different doctor than usual, be sure to say you have diabetes, or have your identification **BRACELET** or **NECKLACE** in plain sight.

In case of a medical emergency, make sure to have your identification in plain sight.



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