



NHS Tayside Diabetes Managed Clinical Network Patient Information Leaflet

Sick Day Rules for People with Type 2 Diabetes on Insulin

What happens when you feel unwell?

People with diabetes do not have more illness than others but if you do become unwell it is likely that your blood glucose control will be upset.

High blood glucose levels (Hyperglycaemia)

If your blood glucose level is constantly above guidelines you may begin to develop some of the symptoms that you had before your diabetes was diagnosed. The early symptoms include:

- Increased thirst
- Dry mouth
- Passing a lot of urine
- Tiredness and lethargy
- High urine or blood glucose levels.

Common illnesses, which could raise your blood glucose levels, include:

- A cold, flu or virus
- Stomach upset
- Sore throats
- Urinary infections
- Chest infection
- Abscesses
- Injury i.e. broken bone

Taking steroid tablet or injections will also raise your blood glucose.

Sick Day Rules:

- Your blood glucose may rise above normal even if you are not able to eat your normal meals or drink anything, so **never stop taking your insulin.**
- Test your blood glucose levels every 2-4 hours and adjust your insulin - see adjustment leaflets.
- To prevent dehydration try to drink 4-6 pints of sugar free liquids per day. This is approximately one glass every hour.
- If you are sick or unable to eat solid carbohydrate foods replace this with liquid carbohydrates such as Lucozade, fruit juice, ordinary lemonade/coke.

- If you are not being sick but have lost your appetite try milky drinks, ordinary jelly (not sugar free) ice cream or custard.

Each of these contain 10 gms of carbohydrate:

Milk	1 cup (200ml)
Fruit juice (unsweetened)	1 small glass (100ml)
Lucozade	50 mls
Coca cola (not diet)	150mls
Lemonade (not diet)	150mls
Ice cream	1 scoop
Ordinary jelly	2 tablespoons
Fruit yoghurt	½ small carton (60gms)
Plain yoghurt	1 small carton (120gms)

- As you start to feel better, reintroduce solid foods and discontinue sugary drinks.
- It is important to rest.

Very occasionally your blood glucose levels may fall during illness. Low blood sugar is also known as hypoglycaemia or hypo. If this happens and your blood sugars are below 4 mmols, treat the hypo with lucozade and reduce your insulin by 2-4 units. Keep reducing the insulin in this way until your blood glucose test rises above 4mmols. When you are better gradually increase the insulin back to your usual dose. Further information on hypos can be found in the leaflet “Having a Hypo” available on www.diabetes-healthnet.ac.uk or from your diabetes team.

Contact your Diabetes Team or GP urgently if:

- You continue to vomit and/or are unable to keep anything down.
- You have missed more than one meal.
- Your symptoms do not improve within 24-48 hours.
- You are worried about any aspect of your illness.
- You need assistance to alter your insulin doses.

DIABETES NURSES CONTACT NUMBERS (working day hours only Mon- Fri)

Ninewells Hospital Team 01382 632293

Angus Team 01241 447811

Perth Team 01738 473476

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