



Sick days for type 2 diabetes

Everyday illness or infection may result in a major rise in blood glucose levels. At the earliest sign of a cold, or virus or any other illness, it is important for you to take action. It is difficult to predict how an illness will affect you.

Start to follow a sick day action plan immediately if:

- You are unwell or have any signs of illness, even if your BGL is normal.
- Your BGL is greater than 15 mmol/L for 8-12 hours even if you are feeling ok.

Sick day action plan-What to do.

1. Test your BGL every 2-4 hours. This is the only way to monitor the effect of your illness on your BGL.
2. Keep eating and drinking if possible. Try to have half to one cup of fluid (125-250 mls) every hour to avoid dehydration. If you are able to eat then this will help to maintain your energy requirements and prevent hypoglycaemia. (This can occur if you take insulin or certain diabetes medication).

If you are too unwell to eat then replace food with fluids:

BGL more than 15 mmol/L=drink sugar free fluids (e.g. water, diet soft drink, diet cordial, tea or coffee with no added sugar).

BGL less than 15 mmol/L=drink sweetened fluids (e.g. ordinary soft drink, ordinary cordial or tea or coffee with 3 teaspoons of sugar or honey).

3. Continue taking your diabetes medications or insulin, even if you are unable to eat. Metformin (which has many different brand names) is the only medication that may need to be ceased if you are vomiting or have diarrhoea, or not eating. **Check with your doctor** if you need to cease Metformin during your illness.
4. If you live alone, let someone know that you are unwell so that they can check how you are. If you are not well enough to follow these steps then call your doctor or diabetes educator for advice.
5. **Go to hospital or your medical clinic if:**
 - Vomiting persists.
 - BGL is greater than 15 mmol/L for more than 24 hours.



- You are feeling drowsy, confused, having difficulty breathing or have severe abdominal pain.
- Hypoglycaemia (low BGL) is severe and cannot be maintained above 4 mmol/L.
- You are so unwell you are unable to self blood glucose monitor and/or your support person is unable to monitor for you.

Women with diabetes who are pregnant may need to be more cautious and seek immediate medical advice with any signs of illness.

6. Be prepared for when you are unwell and organise a sick day kit.
(Every 6 months check your kit to ensure that it is fully stocked and that all products are in date.)
7. Discuss what to do when sick with your diabetes team and family.

Suggestions for items to include in your kit:

- Sick day information.
- Telephone numbers to call for support.
- Food for sick days.
- Pain relief medication.
- Thermometer.
- Monitoring booklet.
- In date blood glucose testing strips and monitoring equipment.

Aim to stay healthy.

- Consider preventative actions such as immunisation for flu and pneumonia.
- Wash hands after going to the toilet, handling food, touching animals and blowing your nose.
- Achieve optimal control of your diabetes. This can reduce the risk of illness or infection.

It is important to keep up your carbohydrate and fluid intake even when you are ill. Here are some ideas to provide 15 grams of carbohydrate.



Drinks providing approximately 15 grams of carbohydrate

Milk	1 cup (250 ml)
Milk with flavouring	$\frac{3}{4}$ cup milk+1 tablespoon of Milo [™] , Activite [™] or Quick [™]
Fruit juice*	$\frac{3}{4}$ cup
Tea or coffee	Add 3 teaspoons of sugar or honey
Hot lemon juice	Add 3 teaspoons of sugar or honey
Herbal tea	Add 3 teaspoons of sugar or honey
Gastrolyte [™]	4 sachets
Ordinary soft drink*or cordial (not diet)	$\frac{3}{4}$ cup
Sports drinks(e.g. Gatorade [™])	1 cup

Foods providing approximately 15 grams of carbohydrate

Cracker or crisbread	3 sao/ryvita etc
Dry toast	1 slice
Plain sweet biscuits	3 plain sweet biscuits
Mashed potato	$\frac{1}{2}$ cup
Rice	$\frac{1}{3}$ cup
Breakfast cereal	$\frac{1}{2}$ cup flake cereal or 2 wheat biscuits.
Ordinary jelly	$\frac{1}{2}$ cup
Custard	$\frac{1}{2}$ cup
Ice cream	1 50g scoop
Ice blocks	1-1/2 sticks

*care should be taken with sweetened or hypertonic fluids if diarrhoea occurs.

Sweetened fluids may be diluted up to 1:5 for optimal absorption.

Sick Day Action Plan

When do I need to follow a sick day action plan?	
Any special instructions about medications	
Any special instruction about food and fluids	
Instruction for blood glucose monitoring	
When to seek medical help	
Who to contact and phone numbers	
Any other instructions	

Publication Updated Dec 15, 2010