

Managing Sick Days for People with Diabetes

- 1. Contact the Diabetes Centre** if you have questions about your diabetes management. We are here to help!
- 2. Take your diabetes medication/insulin** as prescribed. Do not omit. Check with your family physician before making any changes to your medication or insulin. It is a good idea to discuss this with your doctor in advance.
- 3. Check your blood glucose** every four hours. If blood glucose is greater than 14 mmol/L for more than 24 hours, contact your family physician. Discuss with your doctor if you need to check urine ketones.
- 4. Drink plenty of fluids** and eat well-tolerated foods (see next page). Illness can affect your diabetes control because your body produces stress hormones to help fight colds, infections, etc. As a result, your insulin may not work as usual. This can lead to high blood glucose levels and you can become dehydrated.
- 5. 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.

MAHC Diabetes Centers



Bracebridge Site:

205 Hiram Street,
2nd Floor
P1L 2C1
Bracebridge, ON
(705) 645-8824
(705) 645-3983 (fax)

Huntsville Site:

100 Frank Miller Drive
Huntsville, ON
P1H 1H7
(705) 789-2311 ext. 2312
(705) 789-0073 (fax)

Drink Extra Fluids

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

- Water
- Diet gingerale 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 Emergency.

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
- 1 cup milk

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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 & 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 & alternatives, fruits, grains and starches:

- 1/2 sherbet
- 1 regular popsicle
- 1 cup cream soup made with water
- 1/2 cream soup made with milk
- 1/2 cup sugar-free pudding
- 1 cup yogurt, plain or artificially sweetened
- 7 soda crackers

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When Should I call my Doctor?

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 doctor if:

- Your blood glucose stays higher than 14 mmol/L or lower than 4 mmol/L for two consecutive readings
- You are unable to keep liquids or solids down
- You have a fever (temperature over 38.3 degrees C)
- You have diarrhea or vomiting twice or more in 4 hours
- Have difficulty breathing
- Have moderate to large ketones (if you have type 1 diabetes)
- 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 numbers is a good idea.

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