

# Managing Diabetes Safely During Sick Days

Illness can make it harder to manage your diabetes. It may be difficult to take your usual doses of diabetes medicines or eat as you usually do. But with planning and close contact with your diabetes care team, you can keep things under control.

## Keep track of your blood sugar

- Check your blood sugar when you are sick even if you are usually under good control
- Check at least every 2 - 4 hours



## Continue to take your diabetes medicines

- If you take insulin or other injectable medicine, talk with your diabetes care team. They may advise you to continue to take it even if you are vomiting (throwing up) or unable to eat
- If you take diabetes pills, check with your provider whether to continue taking your medication.

## When to call your Diabetes care team

You can call your diabetes care team any time you have questions or concerns. But you should definitely call if:

- Your blood sugar is less than 70 mg/dL
- You have high blood sugar (240 mg/dL or more) for more than 6 hours
- You haven't kept any liquids down for more than 4 hours
- You have a fever (101.5oF or higher)
- You have severe pain in your stomach, have chest pain, or have a hard time breathing
- You have been vomiting or having diarrhea for more than 6 hours

*In addition to the general sick day guidelines if you have type 1 diabetes be sure to:*

- Check for ketones if your blood sugar is 250 or higher. Call your provider if you have moderate to large ketones.
- Always take your basal insulin.
- Vomiting or diarrhea for over 2 hours
- Blood glucose levels above 250 mg after two checks, or if levels do not go down after extra insulin.

## Keep the carbs coming

You may be vomiting or having diarrhea. Or your blood sugar may be high. Even so, you need to continue to take in carbohydrates ("carbs"). To prevent low blood sugar, try to eat or drink about 50 grams of carbs every 3 to 4 hours. You can get 15 grams of carbs from these foods:

- ½ cup fruit juice (like orange, apple, or grape)
- ½ cup regular (not sugar free) soda pop
- ½ cup regular gelatin dessert or instant pudding
- 1 double ice pop
- 1 cup soup
- 1 cup sports drink
- 1 slice toast
- 6 soda crackers



## Drink up

Keep a pitcher of water or other non-caloric drink by your bed, so that you can drink 4 - 6 ounces every half hour. If you cannot get enough carbohydrates through food choices, alternate sugar-free fluids with beverages that contain sugar.  
\* If drinking causes you to vomit, try sucking on an ice pop.

## Keep the following on hand

- Thermometer
- Sick day foods
- Acetaminophen (Tylenol)
- Sugar-free cough drops and syrup
- 24 -hour pharmacy telephone number
- Ketone strips (type 1)

Note: be sure to check expiration dates on any supplies you do not routinely use.

