

Sick-Day Plans

If you have diabetes

This handout is for people with type 2 diabetes. It explains what to do when you are sick to prevent problems with your blood glucose levels. Talk with your healthcare team to develop sick-day plans for your specific needs.

How does illness affect blood sugars?

When you are ill or under emotional stress, your body releases hormones that can raise your blood glucose levels. This makes it harder to control your blood sugars.

If you have type 2 diabetes, you need to know how to manage your blood sugars during illness. Talk with your healthcare team about what to do when you are sick. Knowing how to manage your diabetes during illness can help keep a minor illness from becoming a major problem.

How do I manage my type 2 diabetes when I am sick?

As soon as you see signs of illness:

- Start checking your blood glucose levels at least 4 times a day. Do this before meals and at bedtime, even if you do not usually check it that often. Write down the results so you have them handy if you need to call your healthcare team.
- Increase your fluid intake as much as you can. If most of your glucose levels are staying:
 - **Under 240 mg/dL:** You can drink some liquids that contain carbohydrate, such as juice.
 - **Over 240 mg/dL:** Most of the liquids you drink should be sugar-free.



Schedule a time to talk with your diabetes care provider if you have any questions about how to manage your diabetes.

- Do **not** stop taking your diabetes medicine unless your healthcare team tells you to. If you use metformin, find out if you need to stop using it when you are ill. This is very important if you have been vomiting or have diarrhea.
- If you vomit more than once, call your healthcare team for advice. You may need to adjust your diabetes medicine or food choices.

What can I eat when I'm sick?

When you are sick, the most important thing to do is to drink lots of fluids! Unless you are on a fluid-restricted plan, try to drink at least 8 cups of caffeine-free liquids every day.

If you cannot eat regular foods, try some soft solids or liquid foods, such as the ones listed below. You may see some foods on the list that you usually avoid. Remember, on sick days, these foods are taking the place of your regular foods, and it is OK to eat them.

Soft Foods	Carbohydrates (grams)
1 small slice bread or toast	15
7 saltine crackers	15
½ cup hot cereal	15
1 cup clear soup containing noodles or rice	15
½ cup tapioca made with milk	15
½ cup custard	15 to 20
6 ounces "light" yogurt	20 to 25
½ cup apple or orange juice	15
½ twin popsicle	10
½ cup plain ice cream	15 to 20
½ cup cottage cheese	5

Questions?

Your questions are important. Call your doctor or healthcare provider if you have questions or concerns.

Endocrine and Diabetes Care Center: 206.598.4882

UW Medicine Neighborhood Clinics: 206.520.5000

Other patients: Please call your healthcare provider:
