

# Sick Days



Diabetes Done Right™

The best way to handle sick days is to try to avoid them altogether. This means washing hands, taking special precautions around people who are sick, and wearing a mask when it's appropriate. But no matter how careful you are, everybody gets sick once in a while.

Whether it's the sniffles, an upset stomach, the flu, or an infection like pneumonia, getting sick can make controlling blood sugar difficult. Being sick can cause the body to release hormones that increase blood sugar; a decreased appetite can lower blood sugar; and certain medications can do either.

Luckily, good preparation and a **Sick Day Action Plan** can put you one step ahead.



## How to take charge

Before we get too far, remember: **if in doubt, ask your doctor**. The best sick day plans are coordinated with your healthcare provider. Use these tips and tricks to stay out of the hospital and in the comfort of your home:

### Food & Drink

- Drink 1 cup of water or calorie-free drink every hour and at least 8-10 glasses daily. This will help avoid dehydration and keep blood sugar from getting too high. If you feel nauseous, then take small sips throughout the day.
- Eat your normal meal plan if you're able to.
  - If you are nauseous → try small bland meals throughout the day.
  - If you can't eat for any reason → drink about 50 grams of carbohydrates every 4 hours to avoid having a dip in your blood sugar.
    - 1½ cup of fruit juice or 1½ cup of unsweetened applesauce both contain 50g of carbohydrates.
- Follow the Rule of 15 if you develop low blood sugar, usually defined as < 70mg/dL.

### Medications

- Most people should keep taking their diabetes medications as prescribed.
  - If you take short acting insulin and your diet has changed significantly or your blood sugar is out of range, then you should contact your healthcare provider to determine whether adjustments need to be made.
  - If you have any question about whether or not to take your medications, call **your healthcare provider**.

### Testing

- People who are at higher risk of having swings in their blood sugars should test about every 4 hours when they're sick.
  - This includes people with Type 1 Diabetes, people who are on medications that can cause low blood sugar, and people who start new medications while they're sick.
- People who use insulin should periodically check their ketones if instructed by their doctor.

## What to look out for

If your blood sugar gets dangerously high, you could be at risk of developing a diabetes emergency. The two high blood sugar emergencies are hyperosmolar hyperglycemic syndrome (HHS) and Diabetic Ketoacidosis (DKA). Both HHS and DKA are life threatening emergencies that need to be treated in the hospital. If left untreated, they can lead to coma or death.

*If you have high blood sugar and are experiencing any of the following, reach out to your healthcare provider immediately:*

- Ketones
- Drowsiness, lethargy, confusion, or change in mental status
- Temperature over 101 degrees F for 24 hours
- Severe diarrhea or vomiting that lasts for more than 6 hours
- Inability to keep liquids down for more than 4 hours
- Severe abdominal pain
- Difficulty breathing
- Fruity smelling breath

## What to do next

Fill out the **Glucose Guards Sick Day Action Plan** to prepare yourself for your next sick day.