



Managing Diabetes on Sick Days

Planning ahead will help you be prepared to handle sick days with confidence. You will need to take special care of yourself when you are sick.

Getting sick can raise or lower blood sugar levels making it more difficult to control diabetes and stay within your blood sugar target range.



On Sick Days

1 Check your blood sugar more often, at least every 3 to 4 hours.


2 Keep taking your diabetes pills and insulin, even if you cannot eat.

3 Drink plenty of fluids to keep your body from getting dry or dehydrated.

4 Try to eat the same amount of carbohydrates that you normally do.

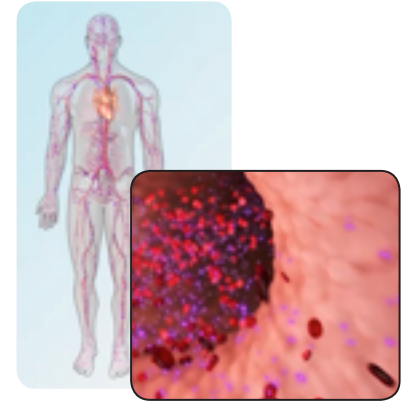
5 Follow your normal meal plan as close as possible.

6 Record your blood sugar levels, symptoms, the medications you take, and the food and drinks you consume.

 Be sure to have your written record available when you talk to your health care provider.

When You Get Sick

- Your body sees the illness as stress. To relieve the stress, it releases energy, which makes your blood sugar rise.
- Even a minor illness can lead to dangerously high blood sugar levels, requiring emergency medical care.
- Loss of appetite, nausea and vomiting can make it harder to follow your usual meal plan.
- Poor intake of food can cause your blood sugar levels to fall too low.

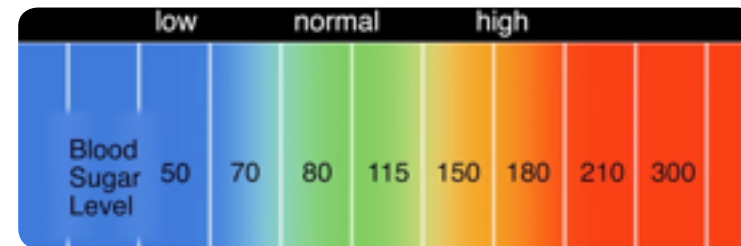
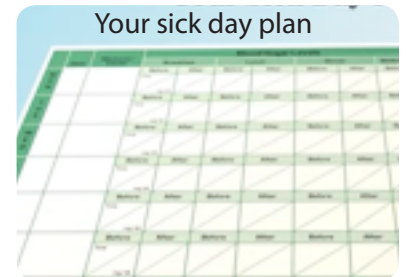


Your body's reaction to the stress of illness raises your blood sugar level.

Make a Sick Day Plan

Plan ahead before you get sick. Work with your health care team to help you develop an action plan for sick days.

Make sure you know your blood sugar target range and know what to do if your blood sugar is too high or too low.



Know your blood target range.

Include These Things in Your Sick Day Plan

- Check your blood sugar more often, at least every 3 to 4 hours.
- Continue taking your diabetes pills and insulin.
- Follow your health care provider's instructions about how much diabetes medication to take.
- Check with your doctor or pharmacist before taking any over-the-counter medications. Some medicines may make your blood sugar too high or too low.
- Continue taking your other prescription medications, as directed.
- Drink extra fluids (1 to 2 cups per hour) to keep from getting dehydrated.
- Follow your normal meal plan.
- Keep a small stock of easy-on-the-stomach foods, such as crackers, soup, yogurt and applesauce, on hand for sick days. If you find even mild foods too hard to eat, try to drink enough fluids that contain the same amount of carbohydrates you would normally eat.
- Keep a written sick-day record. Write down your blood sugar levels, symptoms, the amount of medications you take, when you take them, and the food and drinks you consume.
- Ask for help. It can be difficult to manage diabetes on your own when you are sick. Ask family and friends to check in on you.



If your blood sugar gets too high or too low, you may have to change how much medication you take.



Drinking liquids helps remove extra sugar in your blood and replace lost fluids.



If you cannot eat, make sure to drink fluids such as juice, frozen juice bars, broth and regular soda (not diet).



Remember, on sick days:

- NEVER stop taking your diabetes medication unless your health care provider says you should.
- Follow your health care provider's instructions about how you should adjust your medication plan.
- Do not change or stop taking prescription medications without first talking with your health care provider.
- ALWAYS check with your doctor or pharmacist before taking over-the-counter medications.



Call your doctor right away if you:

- Cannot keep fluids down for more than 4 hours.
- Have been throwing up or have diarrhea that lasts more than 6 hours.
- Have a blood sugar level that stays over 300 or under 70.
- Have not eaten normally for more than 24 hours.
- Have trouble breathing.
- Cannot stay awake or think clearly.

Watch online at:

GMCmanagingdiabetes.com

This handout is intended to supplement the information you receive from your health care provider. This information should never be considered personal medical advice. Always contact your health care provider with questions or concerns.