

# Sick Day Management Plan: COVID-19



**Coronavirus infection must be a real concern for you.** This document will cover some of the important steps you can take to prevent yourself from getting infected but also how to manage it if you do. What we know so far, is that people with diabetes are more likely to get sicker from the virus than others, but the majority will get through. It is really important to manage your diabetes well, now more than ever. (Dr David Segal)

## Don't get infected!

- SELF-ISOLATE yourself NOW. The virus is spread by close contact with other people and surfaces that have been contaminated.
- STAY AT HOME. Send healthy friends or family to the shops for you.
- Prepare your own food or have home cooked meals prepared for you.
- Keep your DISTANCE from people in your house - no hugs for now.
- WHERE A MASK - even a homemade mask will do.
- WASH YOUR HANDS regularly with soap and water.
- DON'T TOUCH YOUR FACE.
- CLEAN SURFACES - (cups, plates, knives, forks, pens, tables, chairs) OFTEN with appropriate cleaning materials.

## EMERGENCY CONTACTS

Doctor

Hotline or Hospital

## If you do get infected

- Follow your normal sick day management plan.
- Test your glucose more often.
- Don't stop your insulin.
- Increase your insulin to keep your glucose levels below 15 mmol/l.
- You will have a FEVER which may last days, so DRINK MORE WATER.
- Your APPETITE WILL DECREASE; don't worry about eating, rather drink your calories.
- You may have aches and pains
- Symptoms often peak by day 7.
- Keep a close eye on your symptoms - especially your BREATHING.
- CALL your emergency number or your healthcare provider if you are worried, if you experience odd symptoms or the above measures are not helping.

## Symptoms and signs of Coronavirus infection

- Fever
- Cough
- Sore throat
- Muscle aches
- Loss of sense of smell
- Loss of appetite
- Diarrhoea, vomiting, abdominal pain

If you develop these, call your doctor and get tested for Coronavirus, and QUARANTINE yourself.

## TOOL KIT

- Face mask
- Soap and water
- Hand sanitizer
- List of people who will help you
- Thermometer
- Cell phone
- 1 month supply of medication
- Paracetamol

## Signs and symptoms of deterioration

- Difficulty breathing or laboured rapid breathing
- Swelling of your feet or ankles
- Chest pain or irregular heart rhythm
- Confusion
- Extreme fatigue or lack of energy
- Diarrhoea
- Vomiting
- Stomach pain

**CALL or seek help if you have any of these symptoms**

# Sick Day Management Plan



**We know that people living with diabetes** also get sick from time to time. It is important that you know how to manage yourself at these times and have a “Sick Day Management Plan”. So, ideally both you and your Health Care Team have agreed to your own individualised plan. It is important to recognise that your blood glucose levels will be affected. If you are well informed with the right skills and knowledge, you can cope at home safely at these times or should know when to ask for more help. (Dr David Segal)

## What happens when you are sick?

Your body will make increased amounts of your **stress hormone cortisol**. Cortisol makes your body more insulin resistant and you will need more insulin when you are sick not less. If your body has too little insulin, your liver will produce more glucose and your cells will take up less leading to higher blood glucose levels. This leads to **increased urination and thirst**. The cells will look for alternative fuel sources and your body will start breaking down fat, which is converted to ketones in your liver. Ketones cause **tummy aches, nausea and vomiting** and are very dangerous.

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## Signs and Symptoms

- High blood glucose levels- make you thirsty and urinate more often which can lead to dehydration which causes more stress
- Ketone build-up leads to tummy aches, nausea and eventually vomiting.
- Vomiting without diarrhoea could be a sign of ketone build-up
- Rapid breathing without a cough or fever could be a sign of ketone build-up.
- If you cannot keep fluids down or have symptoms that make you worried, call for help.
- Most sick day problems can be resolved with telephonic guidance from your healthcare provider.
- Call or seek help if you have symptoms that make you worried or that are not responding to your attempts to treat them

## What else must I do to control my diabetes?

**Test** your blood glucose more regularly. This means at least every 2 - 4 hours and throughout the night.

**Check** for ketones if you only take insulin to manage your diabetes or if you experience symptoms of ketone build-up.

**Drink** more water, as you may well notice you are thirstier than normal. Take small sips often rather than big gulps to prevent vomiting. There is no need to eat when you are sick.

**Inject** your normal long acting or pre-mix dose  
Inject short acting insulin more often according to your pre-arranged **sick-day plan**

**Call your emergency number or your healthcare provider** if you are worried, if you experience odd symptoms or the above measures are not helping.

## TOOL KIT

- Blood glucose meter
- Glucose test strips
- Rapid acting insulin
- Basal insulin
- Rapid acting carbs e.g. fruit juice or sugary drink
- Ketone strips
- Glucagon
- A bucket

## What about my medications?

- Keep taking your medication as prescribed, even if you have not eaten much.
- DO NOT skip your insulin, you often need more, not less.
- There are 2 medications that should be stopped when you are sick: Metformin and SGLT2 inhibitors.
- Over the counter medications that contain sugar are okay.
- Anti-nausea medications may not work if ketones are present.