

Diabetes Education

WHEN YOU ARE ILL

The most frequent health problems are: infections such as flu or colds, fever, diarrhoea and vomiting.

Illnesses in a person with diabetes can cause:

- An increase in blood sugar level.
- The presence of acetone in the urine.
- A greater tendency to become dehydrated.

It is therefore important to know how to act in such situations.

General recommendations

1. Never stop taking your diabetes medicine, either pills or insulin. Take your usual dose.
2. Don't stop eating, even if your blood sugar level is high, you have a temperature or you have not got much appetite. Drink at least 2-3 litres of liquid a day spread out at 3-hour intervals. Keep to a liquid or soft diet based on water, natural juices, infusions (such as tea) with sugar, consommé (clear soup), rice broth, purées, semolina, biscuits, bread. If you are sick, start by drinking frequent small amounts of water or other liquids. Have pasty or liquid foods instead of solids.
3. If you have a fever, take something to bring your temperature down, such as paracetamol.
4. If you have intense diarrhoea, cut out milk and other dairy products. Take rice soups, carrot purée and mashed potato. Drink a lot of liquid (more than 3 litres a day).
5. Rest.
6. Increase the number of times you test your blood sugar level to at least three a day (before breakfast, lunch and dinner) and keep a record of the results.
7. If your blood sugar level is above 300 mg/dl or the vomiting and fever persist, test for acetone in your urine, especially if you use insulin. You can test for acetone in your urine using some special reagent strips which you can get from your doctor.



Consult your doctor if:

- There is no improvement in 48 hours.
- Your blood sugar level is above 300 mg/dl.
- You keep on vomiting and are unable to take any liquid food for several hours.
- There is acetone in your urine (one or more crosses on the reagent strip).
- You feel very drowsy, your mouth is very dry or your temperature is over 39 °C.
- You are in any doubt as to what to do.