

Diabetes sick day management

What to do when your child is sick

Be sure your child is receiving enough insulin.



Maintain insulin schedule

- Always take long-acting insulin as scheduled.



Check blood sugar

- Monitor levels at least every two to four hours.
- Extra correction insulin is needed if blood sugars are high.



Check urine or blood ketones every four hours

- Ketones can form when your child is sick, even if blood sugars are normal.
- Extra insulin is needed if ketones are elevated.
- Early detection of ketones can help prevent hospitalizations.
- Ketones and blood sugars usually increase together—but not always. Be sure to treat both.



Stick to a regular meal plan

- Ill children need fuel from carbohydrates. They also need the insulin that helps process the carbohydrates.
- Give rapid-acting insulin (Humalog, Novolog or Apidra) to correct high blood sugars, even if your child is not eating.



Give plenty of fluids

- Dehydration can readily occur when your child is ill.
- Avoid caffeine as it can increase fluid loss.
- If your child is adequately hydrated, he should use the restroom at least every four hours. If this is not happening, be sure to provide more fluids.
- Keep these on hand for sick days: sugar-containing beverages, Pedialyte, Jell-O (regular or sugar-free), broth, popsicles, applesauce, toast, saltines, rice and other bland foods.

When to call your doctor

Your endocrinologist (diabetes doctor) will manage your diabetes concerns. Call the doctor before giving any medication for nausea or vomiting.



Call your diabetes doctor if your child has:

- Signs and symptoms of too little insulin. These may include:
 - High blood sugar (3 blood sugars over 240 in one day)
 - Moderate to large ketones in the urine
 - Repeated vomiting
- Low blood sugars that do not come up with ingestion of carbs
- A severe low requiring glucose gel or glucagon
- A severe low resulting in a seizure
- An illness with uncontrollable blood sugars
- Missed a dose of long-acting insulin
- Been prescribed steroids—this medication may increase insulin needs

Call 911 if your child is less alert or having trouble breathing.



Before calling your diabetes doctor, know:

- Temperature and symptoms (vomiting or diarrhea)
- Current blood sugar and ketone results
- The last time your child urinated

Remember to call your child's primary care doctor for all other concerns.

Good sick day management and communication with the diabetes doctor can prevent diabetic ketoacidosis (DKA).

What is DKA?

DKA occurs when there is not enough insulin in the body, which causes it to break down fat too quickly. Fat gets turned into chemicals called ketones. Usually, a body processes ketones easily, but when sick, too many ketones can form. Ketones can make the body acidic and make your child feel ill. This is why good sick day management and timely communication with your child's diabetes doctor is so important. Your child may need more insulin when ill.



Visit choa.org/diabetes to learn more.