

WHAT TO DO WHEN YOU HAVE TYPE 1 DIABETES AND ARE ILL

Information Booklet



University Hospitals of Leicester 
NHS Trust



Leicester Diabetes Centre
Committed to Growing International Research, Education & Innovation

This booklet has been designed to help you to understand:

- WHAT TO DO WHEN YOU HAVE DIABETES AND ARE ILL
- HOW ILLNESS AFFECTS YOUR BLOOD GLUCOSE LEVELS
- MONITORING YOUR DIABETES
- MANAGING YOUR INSULIN
- WHAT TO EAT AND DRINK
- WHEN TO SEEK HELP

HOW DOES ILLNESS AFFECT YOUR BLOOD GLUCOSE?

When you are ill, or have an infection or a virus such as a cold, your blood glucose levels may rise in response to this, even if you are not eating.

This may make you feel thirsty and pass urine more frequently, which can make you dehydrated. You may therefore need to increase the dose of your insulin to combat this.

When you have Type 1 diabetes, your body can produce a substance called ketones when you are unwell, which can cause a serious condition called **diabetic ketoacidosis (DKA)**.

It is possible to manage your diabetes during illness effectively and keep your blood glucose levels down by following the simple advice given in this leaflet.

**IF YOU ARE
PREGNANT, SEEK
IMMEDIATE ADVICE**

**DO NOT SUDDENLY
STOP TAKING
YOUR INSULIN
DURING ILLNESS.**



6 THINGS TO REMEMBER FOR PEOPLE WITH DIABETES WHEN ILL

1. Try to drink at least 4 to 6 pints (2.5 - 3.5L) of sugar-free fluid in 24 hours to prevent becoming dehydrated



2. Avoid strenuous exercise as this could affect your blood glucose levels



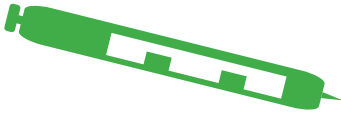
3. Treat symptoms such as a high temperature or a cough with basic medicines such as paracetamol/aspirin and cough medicines. These do not have to be sugar-free varieties, as they are taken in small quantities



4. Test your blood glucose and ketone levels, checking them at least 4 times a day. The treatment of Type 1 diabetes during illness is based on ketone reduction



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5. If you have been taught how to adjust, increase or decrease your insulin doses accordingly, see the flowcharts on pages 6 and 7



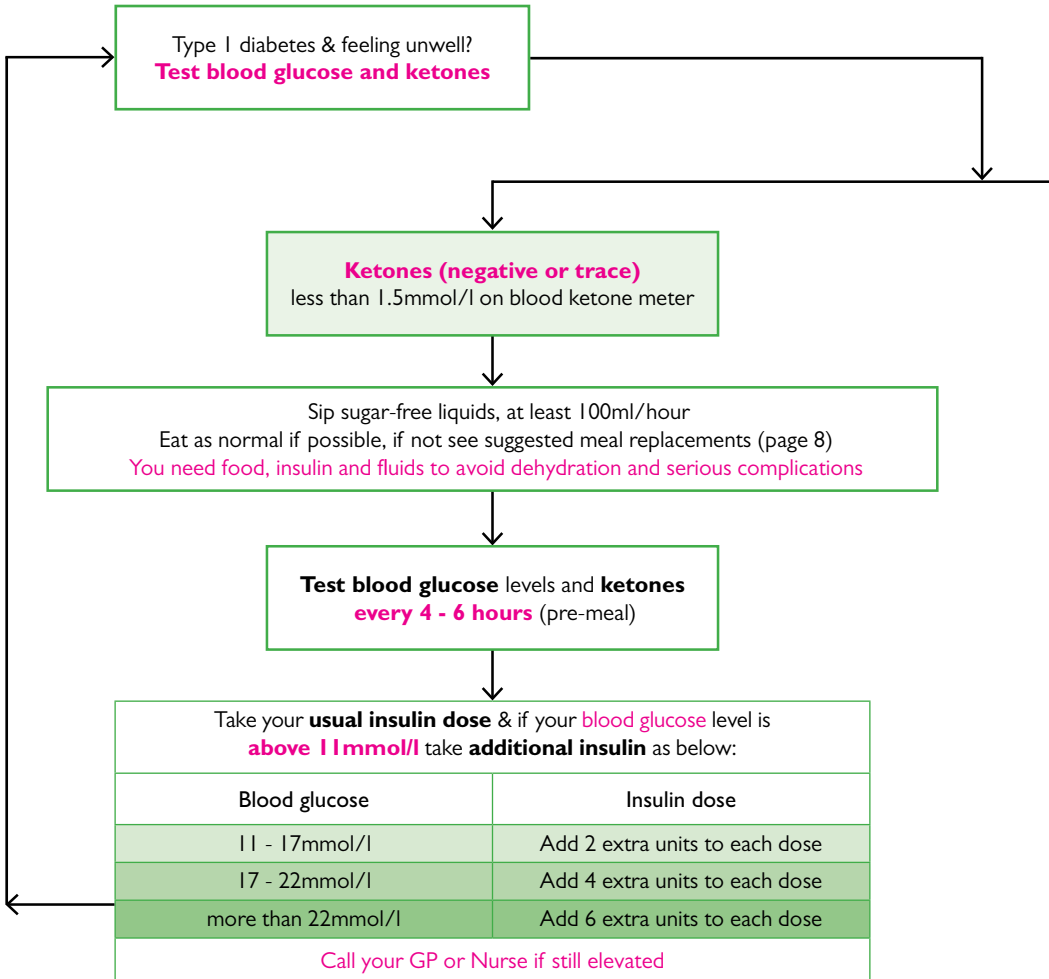
6. See your GP if you think you have an infection, as you may need antibiotics



Seek medical help if your blood glucose readings remain higher than usual, you feel unwell, particularly if you are vomiting and you are not sure what to do!



MANAGING YOUR DIABETES WHILST UNWELL



If you start vomiting, are unable to keep fluids down or unable to control your blood glucose or ketone levels, you must seek urgent medical advice.
DON'T STOP TAKING YOUR INSULIN EVEN IF YOU ARE UNABLE TO EAT.

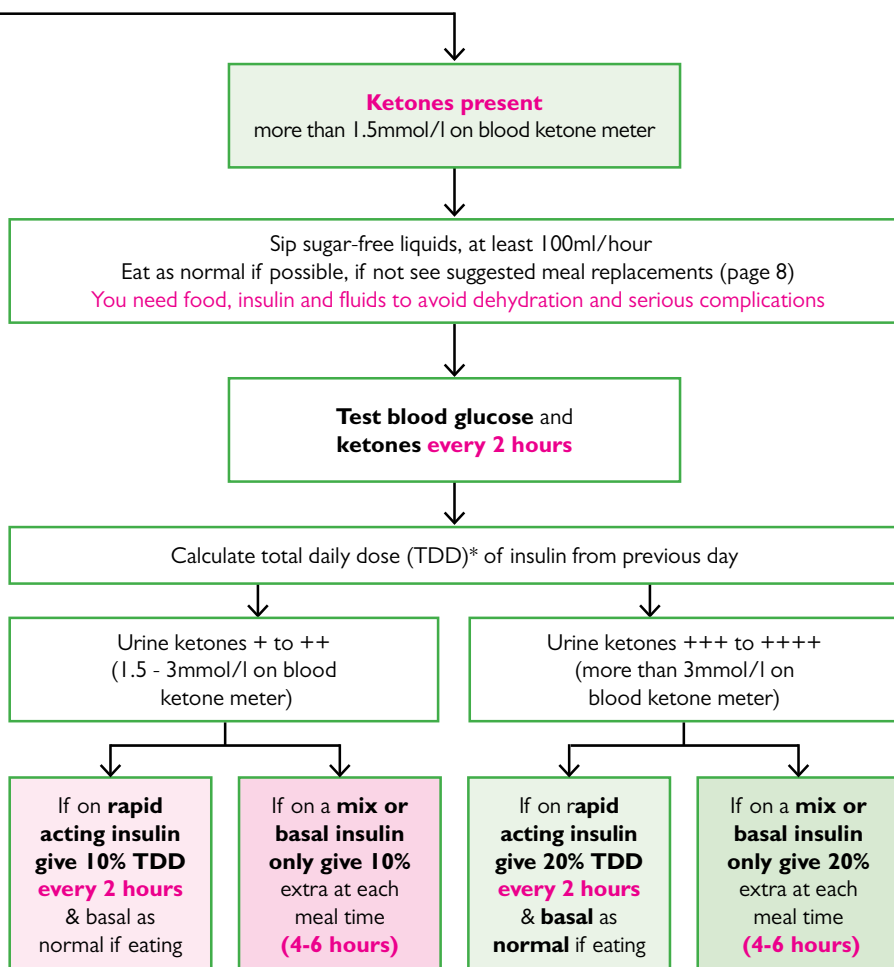
This algorithm has been adapted from the booklet 'Insulin self adjustment advice for people on basal insulin regimen'. The Intermediate Diabetes Service, Enfield Community Services BEH-MHT, 2012.

***Total Daily Dose (TDD)**

Calculate all the insulin you have taken in the last 24 hours then calculate 10% or 20% of your total daily dose, see example

TDD	10%
15 - 20 units	2 units
25 - 30 units	3 units
35 - 40 units	4 units
45 - 50 units	5 units
55 - 60 units	6 units
65 - 70 units	7 units

TDD	20%
15 units	3 units
20 units	4 units
25 units	5 units
30 units	6 units
35 units	7 units
40 units	8 units



MEAL REPLACEMENT SUGGESTIONS

Try to eat as normal but if you cannot manage your usual meals, replace these with light and easily digested foods such as soups and milky puddings.

See the table below for a list of alternative food options.

Remember to keep sugary drinks at home for emergencies.

Type of food alternative	Amount (Each serving provides approximately 10g of carbohydrate)		
Lucozade™ Energy	50mL	¼ glass	2 fl oz
Fruit Juice*	100mL	½ glass	4 fl oz
Cola (NOT diet)*	100mL	½ glass	4 fl oz
Lemonade (NOT diet)*	150 - 200mL	¾ - 1 glass	5 - 7 fl oz
Milk	200mL	1 glass	7 fl oz
Soup	200mL	1 mug	7 fl oz
Ice cream	50g	1 large scoop	2 fl oz
Complan®	-	3 level teaspoons (as a drink)	-
Drinking Chocolate*	-	2 level teaspoons (as a drink)	-
Ovaltine® or Horlicks®	-	2 level teaspoons (as a drink)	-

*sugar quantities may vary according to brand

WHEN TO CALL YOUR GP OR DSN IF YOU NEED IMMEDIATE HELP

Contact your GP or Diabetes Specialist Nurse if:

- You are pregnant
- You cannot keep fluids down
- You have positive ketones and do not know how to adjust your insulin to manage this
- Despite taking the advice in this leaflet, your symptoms are getting worse



USEFUL NUMBERS

YOUR GP:

LOCAL DIABETES
TEAM HELPLINE:

(0116) 258 4919

This booklet is available to download electronically from our Leicestershire Diabetes Website: www.leicestershirediabetes.org.uk

NOTES

Acknowledgements:

Source document TREND-UK 'What to do when you are ill' leaflet

References:

1. Diabetes UK (2013) When you are ill. Available at: http://www.diabetes.org.uk/guide-to-diabetes/Living_with_diabetes/illness/When_you_are_ill accessed 06.06.2013
2. TREND-UK (2013) Managing intercurrent illness in the community, available at: trend-uk.org

Want more information?

These are websites where you can
find practical information to support you.

www.leicestershirediabetes.org.uk

www.diabetes.org.uk



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