

# WHAT TO DO WHEN YOU HAVE TYPE 2 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 MEDICATION
- 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 or diabetes medication to combat this.

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

**IF YOU ARE  
ON INSULIN  
TREATMENT DO  
NOT SUDDENLY  
STOP TAKING IT  
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, checking them at least 4 times a day



- 
5. If you have been taught how to adjust, increase or decrease your insulin doses accordingly, see the flowcharts on pages 8 and 9



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!



# TYPE 2 DIABETES: MANAGING YOUR DIABETES MEDICATION WHEN YOU ARE ILL

---

Type 2 diabetes and taking non insulin diabetes treatment:

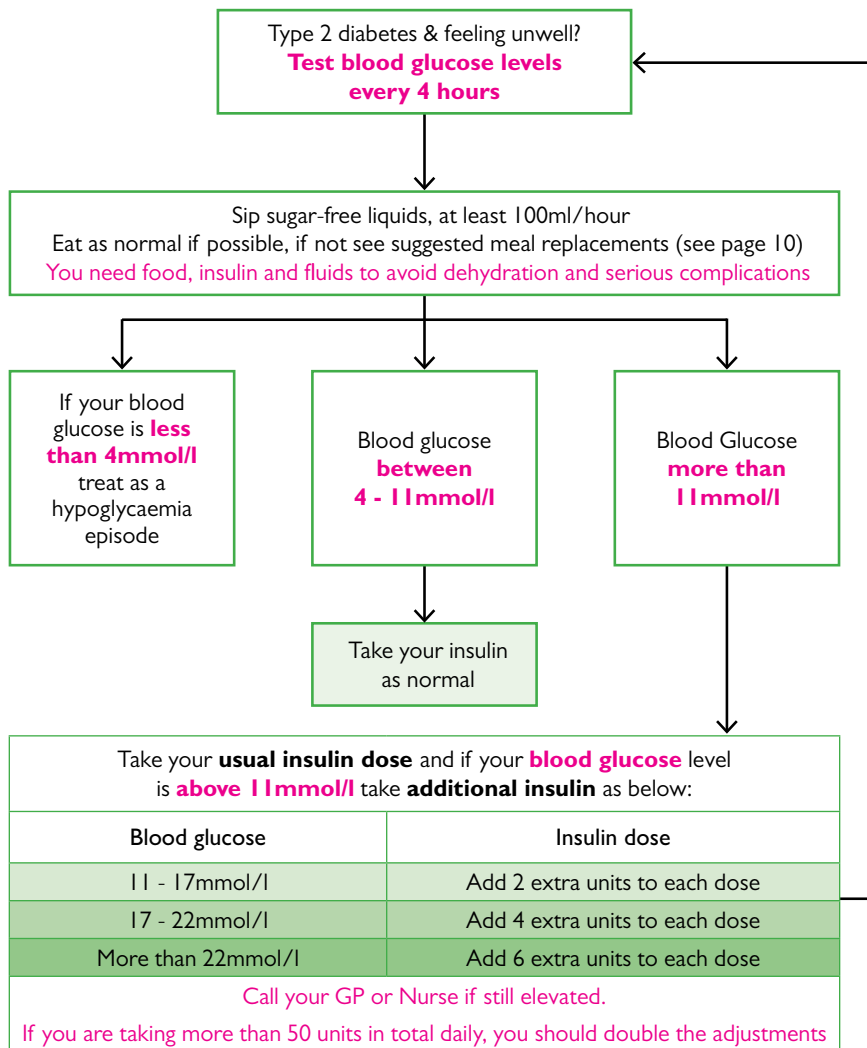
- If you are taking Metformin/ Dapagliflozin/Canagliflozin (SGLT2) Inhibitors and you are vomiting or have diarrhoea, you should stop this medication
- Continue to take other tablets for diabetes such as Gliclazide/Glimepiride even if you are not eating. (Test your blood glucose to make sure your readings are not less than 4mmol/l)
- If you are taking other tablets such as Alogliptin/ Linagliptin/Saxagliptin/ Sitagliptin/Vildagliptin or Pioglitazone continue to take them
- You may need to increase the dose of your tablets or even need insulin injections for a short time while you are ill
- If you are on a GLP-1 agonist such as, Exenatide/ Liraglutide /Lixisenatide and develop abdominal pains, nausea and vomiting stop the medication immediately and seek medical attention
- Monitor and record your blood glucose levels at least 4 times a day (at mealtimes even if you are not eating, and at bedtime)

Contact your GP if you are able to check your blood glucose levels and find they are constantly higher than 15 mmol/l

- 
- If your blood glucose levels are higher than usual, you may need to increase your insulin (See flowchart on page 8 and 9). Contact your GP or Diabetes Specialist Nurse if you are not sure how to do this
  - If your blood glucose levels are lower than usual (because you are eating less than usual) you may need to reduce your insulin dose or non insulin treatment for diabetes




# TYPE 2 DIABETES: MANAGING YOUR INSULIN WHILST UNWELL



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.





If you continue to feel unwell and are unable to keep fluids down or unable to control your blood glucose levels, you must seek urgent medical advice.

## 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:

- If you are pregnant contact the specialist team
- Contact your GP if your blood glucose levels are constantly higher than 15 mmol/l, despite taking the advice in this leaflet
- If your symptoms are getting worse
- If you can't keep fluids down
- If you have acute abdominal pain



## 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](https://www.leicestershirediabetes.org.uk)

Want more information?

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

[www.leicestershirediabetes.org.uk](http://www.leicestershirediabetes.org.uk)

[www.diabetes.org.uk](http://www.diabetes.org.uk)



Leicester Diabetes Centre

Committed to Growing International Research, Education & Innovation

 [www.leicesterdiabetescentre.org.uk](http://www.leicesterdiabetescentre.org.uk)

 [facebook.com/leicesterdiabetescentre](https://facebook.com/leicesterdiabetescentre)

 [@LDC\\_Tweets](https://twitter.com/LDC_Tweets)

January 2015