



## General Sick Day Management for Type 2 Diabetes

**Have you received a sick day leaflet?** - EVERY PERSON WITH DIABETES AND THEIR FAMILY MEMBERS OR CARERS SHOULD GET CLEAR INDIVIDUALISED VERBAL AND WRITTEN ADVICE ('SICK DAY RULES') FROM THEIR DIABETES TEAM ABOUT MANAGING DIABETES DURING ILLNESS OR EPISODES OF HIGH GLUCOSE LEVELS.

### **This leaflet does not replace that information**

**Blood Glucose Levels can be high without food intake?** - When the body is fighting illness it can cause the blood glucose levels to rise even if you are eating less than usual. Symptoms of high blood glucose levels (thirst and passing urine more than normal) can cause dehydration and make you feel more unwell.

Dehydration can also be made worse with a high temperature or vomiting and diarrhoea.

If you usually check your own **blood glucose levels** at home, you may notice that when ill your readings are higher than normal. You are advised to get the illness treated without delay and the blood glucose readings should also then begin to improve.

However if not treated properly high blood glucose levels and dehydration in Type 2 diabetes can lead to serious illness known as Hyperosmolar Hyperglycemic state (HHS). HHS needs to be treated in hospital with intravenous fluids and insulin. Its symptoms include tiredness, thirst, passing urine more frequently, nausea, dry skin and disorientation.

**To avoid this condition when ill it is essential to manage your blood glucose levels as well as the illness.**

**What are ketones?** Ketones are waste products that show up in the blood and urine when body fat is being burned for energy. The blood glucose level is often high but the body cannot use the glucose for energy because of lack of insulin. If ketones are produced more quickly than disposed of, they can cause the blood to become acidic. This can cause serious problems for people with Type 1 diabetes but in Type 2 diabetes some ketones may be present but rarely at high enough levels to cause a major problem.

**Important:** At your Annual Review, GET A COPY OF THE SICK DAY GUIDELINES AS THEY APPLY TO YOUR DIABETES and discuss with your diabetes team what to do in the event of illness, how to manage high blood glucose levels, when you should seek emergency assistance and who to contact if you need advice out of hours. (Have a list of phone numbers for your diabetes team and out of hours GP in a convenient place).

### **General guidelines during illness**

During illness check the glucose levels more frequently at least every 4 hours (even during the night) and adjust your insulin /food intake accordingly as per the sick day regime outlined by your diabetes team.

Helpline: 01 8428118

Email: [info@diabetes.ie](mailto:info@diabetes.ie)

Website: [www.diabetes.ie](http://www.diabetes.ie)

Diabetes Ireland, 19 Northwood House, Northwood Bus. Campus, Santry, Dublin

- . Keep taking your diabetes medication as prescribed.
- . Eat normally when possible and keep hydrated by sipping on water and sugar free fluids.
- . If solid food cannot be taken, have carbohydrates in fluid form e.g. flat soft drink (not diet variety), sip on this to maintain blood glucose levels. This is especially important if you are on insulin or tablets that have the potential to cause hypoglycaemia (low blood glucose level).
  
- . If there is any suspicion that infection is causing the high blood glucose levels, visit your G.P.  
**NB seek medical help if:**
  - . in ANY DOUBT or
  - . Your glucose level remains high (>15mmols).
  - . You are unable to eat
  - . You are vomiting or unable to keep down fluids
  - . Your temperature remains high
  - . Your glucose levels persist below mmol/l

### **Steroids**

Some illness may require treatment with steroids. Steroids will cause high blood glucose levels as they work against the action of insulin. If you are prescribed steroids you should discuss with your diabetes team how best to manage your blood glucose levels. Your diabetes medication may need to be adjusted or changed temporarily.