Diabetes, Sick Day Management

Colds, fever, flu, feeling sick to your stomach (*nausea*), vomiting, and diarrhea are all examples of common illnesses that can cause problems for people with diabetes. Loss of body fluids (*dehydration*) from fever, throwing up (*vomiting*), diarrhea, infection, and the stress of an illness can all cause blood glucose (*sugar*) levels to rise. Because of this, it is very important to take your diabetes medications and to eat some form of carbohydrate food when you are sick. Liquid or semisolid foods are often tolerated, and they help to replace fluids.

GUIDELINES WHEN YOU ARE ILL

These main guidelines are intended for managing a short-term (24 hours or less) illness:

- Take your usual dose of insulin or oral diabetes medication. An exception would be if you take any form of Metformin. If you cannot eat or drink, you can become dehydrated and should not take this medication.
- Test your blood glucose level at least 4 times a day, including before each meal and at bedtime. If you have type 1 diabetes, test your urine for ketones every 4 hours.
- Eat some form of food that contains carbohydrates; 45-50 grams of carbohydrate should be consumed every 3 to 4 hours.
- Replace fluids if fever, vomiting or diarrhea is present. A large glass of fluid should be taken every hour (water, tea, broth, etc.) If vomiting is a problem, take small sips of fluids (1-2 tablespoons every 15 minutes), and call your caregiver.
- Watch carefully for the signs of ketoacidosis, if you have type 1 diabetes. Call your caregiver if any of the following symptoms are present, especially in children:
  - Moderate to large ketones in the urine along with a high blood glucose level.
  - Severe nausea.
  - Vomiting.
  - Diarrhea.
  - Abdominal pain.
  - Rapid breathing.

FOOD CHOICES FOR ILLNESS

- *Carbonated beverage containing sugar, 1/2 to 3/4 cup. Preferred clear liquid like:Ginger ale, Sprite®, 7-Up®
- Popsicle®, 1/2 of a twin popsicle
- Sweetened gelatin (Jell-o®), 1/2 cup
- Juice, ½ cup
- Ice cream or frozen yogurt, ½ cup
- Cooked cereal, ½ cup
- Sherbet, ¼ cup
- Broth-based soups with noodles or rice, reconstituted with water, 1 cup
- Cream soups, 1 cup
- Regular Custard, ½ cup
- Regular pudding, ½ cup
- Gatorade®, 1 cup
- Plain yogurt, 1 cup
- Toast, 1 slice
- Saltine crackers, 6 squares
- Vanilla wafers, 5

* Opened and left at room temperature for a few minutes, carbonated beverages will usually be better tolerated.

SEEK MEDICAL CARE IF:

- You are sick for 2 days and not getting better.
- You are unable to eat regular foods for more than 24 hours.

- You have blood glucose readings over 240 mg/dl, 2 times in a row.
- Your blood glucose is less than 70 mg/dl, 2 times in a row
- You are not sure what to do to take care of yourself.
- You are vomiting more than once in 4-6 hours.
- You have moderate or large ketones in your urine.
- Your symptoms are getting worse even though you are following your caregivers instructions.

Note: The use of brand names is for illustrative use only and does not imply an endorsement of these products.

Information derived from: Diabetes.org

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