

Overview

It is very important to take care of diabetes when sick with a minor illness such as a cold, flu, or upset stomach. Being sick can raise blood glucose so the insulin pump should continue to run as prescribed.

Important Things to Remember

1. Check your blood glucose at least every 2-4 hours and write down the results. Check more frequently if you are uncertain about how you are doing. When using an insulin pump:

If your blood glucose reading is over 240 mg/dl twice in a row, change your infusion set, check urine for ketones and take your supplemental sliding scale of insulin as directed by your doctor or every 2 hours.

2. If you have type 1 diabetes and your blood glucose is over 240, check your urine for ketones every time you check your blood glucose. You should also do this if you are unable to keep any food down. Write this level down also.
3. Take your usual dose of insulin. The stress of being sick can raise your blood glucose level, even if you don't eat. Sometimes, when you are sick, more insulin may be needed for a short while to keep your blood glucose in better control. Your doctor will tell you what to do if this is necessary. Follow your doctor's instructions.
4. Follow your meal plan.
 - Drink plenty of sugar-free liquids; at least 8 oz. every hour you are awake.
 - If you can't eat your usual food, try crackers, gelatin, clear soup, or popsicles.
 - If it is difficult for you to eat or you have trouble keeping food down, eat or drink something with sugar in it such as regular ginger ale or regular soda (not diet), non-citrus fruit juice, or applesauce.
5. Call your doctor when:
 - Your blood glucose is less than 70 mg/dl or more than 240 mg/dl twice in a row.
 - Your illness continues without improvement for more than 24 hours.
 - Your temperature is greater than 100 degrees F.
 - You vomit more than once in six hours.
 - You have diarrhea that occurs more than five times per day or lasts longer than 12 hours.

- You have moderate to large ketones in your urine.
 - You feel sleepier or weaker than usual or you can't think clearly.
 - You have trouble breathing.
 - You can not keep any fluids down.
 - You are unsure you can take care of yourself.
6. Tell a family member that you are sick. Ask someone to stay with you if possible.
7. When you call your doctor be ready to tell him/her:
- Your temperature.
 - Your symptoms (vomiting, diarrhea, pain,).
 - Your blood glucose and ketone levels during the time you have been sick.
 - List of foods and fluids you have eaten/drank.
 - List of any medications, including insulin and over-the counter medications (like cough syrup, pain relievers, etc.), you have taken .
 - How long you have been sick.
8. If you must go to the hospital or the emergency room, tell the doctors and nurses that you have diabetes and are on an insulin pump. Make sure your doctor is aware you are there.
9. Even after you start to feel better, it is a good idea to test your blood glucose and ketone levels every 4 hours until you are back to your usual pattern. Having ketones in your urine can be normal for a short period of time and should be discussed with your doctor to determine what steps need to be taken next.

How Can Your Doctor Help You?

Talk about these guidelines with your doctor – he or she may have some other tips for you.