



My diabetes sick day action plan

Why do I have to think about this?

When we are sick, our body releases stress hormones, which in turn increases the amount of glucose in the bloodstream. This can cause blood glucose levels to rise and put you at risk of severe dehydration and other complications.

Sick day action plan

What: A sick day action plan is a step-by-step plan covering what to do when you are sick. It covers monitoring Blood Glucose Level (BGL), medications, nutrition and more. Your healthcare providers can help you develop your plan. Discuss your sick day action plan and kit with your General Practitioner (GP), Credentialed Diabetes Educator (CDE) and diabetes team.

When: Follow your sick day action plan:

✓ When feeling sick

OR

✓ Your BGL over > 15 mmol/L for 8-12 hours or longer

Your sick day action plan includes these and other important checkpoints:

1. Tell someone

Let a trusted friend or family member know you are sick. Tell them the main points of your sick day action plan and if possible have them visit or check up on you until you feel well.

2. Blood-glucose monitoring

- If you usually monitor your BGL, check every two hours or more, according to your sick day action plan
- If you don't usually monitor your BGL, ask your healthcare provider if it's necessary

3. Diabetes medications

If you are experiencing vomiting and/or diarrhoea and are unable to eat or drink, you may need to temporarily stop taking some medications. This is to reduce your risk of hypoglycaemia. Your sick day action plan will outline more.

4. Eating and drinking

To avoid dehydration, keep drinking when unwell, and eat if you can. Generally speaking:

- Drink 125 – 250mL of liquids each hour (oral rehydration solutions such as Hydralyte are safe for people with diabetes)
- Eat normally; if this is impossible eat small snacks including slow-acting carbohydrates
- When BGL is <15 mmol/L and you cannot keep food down: drink 250mL of liquid containing carbs every hour (e.g. cordial, weak tea with honey, sports drinks)
- When BGL is >15 mmol/L and you cannot keep food down: drink 250mL of liquid WITHOUT carbs every hour (e.g. diet cordial, weak tea without sweetener, broth)

5. Getting help

Always contact your doctor early if you are unsure about something. They are there to help you.

6. Call for help immediately if you

- Are too sick to follow your action plan and do not have a support person to help you
- Do not know what to do to stay safe
- Are experiencing signs of dehydration such as extreme thirst, dry mouth, not urinating, confusion or drowsy
- Have deep/rapid breathing or shortness of breath
- Have chest pain
- Have an infected foot
- Are vomiting, have diarrhoea and/or abdominal pains for more than two hours
- See your BGL are rising despite following your sick day action plan
- Are unable to keep your BGL above 4 mmol/L

My sick day kit

To be prepared when unwell, create a kit with the following items.¹ Make sure a trusted friend or family member knows where the kit is and how to help you use it if necessary.

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| ✓ A paper copy of your sick day action plan | ✓ Hypo kit |
| ✓ A blood glucose meter | ✓ Contact list for health support team |
| ✓ Blood glucose monitoring strips | ✓ A list of relevant medical information (e.g. Medicare number, NDSS number, medical insurance information, emergency numbers) |
| ✓ Place to record BGL (a pen and notebook, your blood glucose diary or app) | |
| ✓ Place to record food/drink intake (a pen and notebook, your blood glucose diary or app) | If you have type 2 diabetes and use insulin, add the following to your kit at the time of use: |
| ✓ A thermometer | ✓ rapid-acting or short-acting insulin |
| ✓ Food and drinks for sick days (think non-perishable, slow-release carbs, energy drinks, tea, broth) | ✓ insulin pens and pen needles or syringes |

Make sure you check your kit every three months and after a period of illness, to replenish supplies as necessary.

My to do list:

- ✓ Create a sick day action plan with my healthcare team
- ✓ If you have not created a sick day action plan, make a specific appointment to create one
- ✓ Locate/purchase items for your sick day kit

✓

✓

✓

Notes:

Sources:

¹ National Diabetes Services Scheme. Fact Sheet: Living well with type 2 diabetes – what to do when you are sick: <https://www.ndss.com.au/wp-content/uploads/fact-sheets/fact-sheet-managing-sick-days-for-type2.pdf?version=3>