

# When You're Sick

Adapted from *Your Guide to Diabetes: Type 1 and 2*, chapter 5  
National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases, NIH

Take good care of yourself when you have a cold, the flu, an infection, or other illnesses. Being sick can raise your blood glucose. When you're sick, do the following:

- Check your blood glucose every 4 hours. Write down the results.
- Keep taking your diabetes medicines. Even if you can't keep food down, you still need your diabetes medicine. Ask your doctor or diabetes educator whether to change the amount of diabetes medicine you take.
- Drink at least a cup (8 ounces) of water or other calorie-free, caffeine-free liquid every hour while you're awake.
- If you can't eat your usual food, try drinking juice or eating crackers, popsicles, or soup.
- If you can't eat at all, drink clear liquids such as ginger ale. Eat or drink something with sugar in it if you have trouble keeping food down.
- Test your urine for ketones if:
  - ✓ your blood glucose is over 240
  - ✓ you can't keep food or liquids down
- Call your health care provider **right away** if:
  - ✓ your blood glucose has been over 240 for longer than a day
  - ✓ you have moderate to large amounts of ketones in your urine
  - ✓ you feel sleepier than usual
  - ✓ you have trouble breathing
  - ✓ you can't think clearly
  - ✓ you throw up more than once
  - ✓ you've had diarrhea for more than 6 hours

## ***ACTION STEPS . . . IF YOU USE INSULIN***

- Take your insulin, even if you've been throwing up. Ask your doctor about how to adjust your insulin dose, based on your blood glucose test results.

## ***ACTION STEPS . . . IF YOU DON'T USE INSULIN***

- Take your diabetes medicines, even if you've been throwing up.

## Other resources:

**Diabetes Care During Natural Disasters, Emergencies, and Hazards**

<http://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/news/docs/disasters.htm>

**What should I do when I am sick?**

<http://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/news/docs/flu.htm#1>