

sick day tips

sick days

how can being sick affect my diabetes?

Illness makes blood sugar control more difficult and increases insulin needs. The physical stress of being “sick” or having surgery causes the blood sugar to go higher. Vomiting and diarrhea can make blood sugar go low.

Illness includes any condition in which the body is physically stressed. This includes things like:

- Colds
- Flu
- Diarrhea
- Ear infections
- Fever
- Poison ivy
- Viruses
- Sunburns

what to do when your child is ill

1. Check blood sugar and ketones. Call the diabetes team during business hours, or the endocrinologist on call if after office hours. See below for details. Check the ketones even if the blood sugar is less than 300 or even low. Ketones can develop as a result of the illness. If ketones are moderate or large, or your child is vomiting, call the office or physician on call.
 - Monday–Friday, 8:00 am–5:00 pm: 937-641-3487, press option 3 to speak to a nurse, then 1 for diabetes, then 1 again for sick calls.
 - After office hours, on weekends or holidays: 937-641-3000. This is the Dayton Children’s operator phone number. The operator will talk to you first and then page the endocrinologist on-call.
2. Contact the diabetes team/endocrinologist for sick day care instruction and insulin dosing instruction. It is often necessary for insulin doses to be adjusted during illness.

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3. If insulin is not taken, especially with illness, high blood sugar and ketones more than likely will occur. This can make your child severely ill. If not treated appropriately, this can quickly progress to DKA (diabetic ketoacidosis). This requires hospitalization and close monitoring in the Intensive Care Unit.
4. You can still use over-the-counter medications such as Tylenol or cough medicine.
 - a. Note: There is not a significant amount of sugar in these medicines even though they taste sweet.
5. If your child is ever prescribed an oral steroid, this will make the blood sugar go up drastically. Please call the office or doctor on call to report the blood sugars so that the insulin doses may be adjusted.
6. For other illness concerns, such as strep, cold, a rash, etc., please call your primary care provider to be seen.

what should my child eat when sick?

Your child will still need to take in some carbohydrates during illness. **If your child does not take in any carbs, starvation ketones may develop.** These ketones are due to the body needing sugar for fuel. If no carbs are eaten, the body resorts to breaking down fat cells as a back-up source of fuel.



If your child does not take in any carbs starvation ketones may develop.

- If your child is unable to or refuses to eat regular foods, liquids with carbs such as regular 7Up®, Sprite®, or Gatorade® may be used instead.
- Fluids are also important to avoid becoming dehydrated.
- Offer at least an ounce (2 tablespoons) of fluid every 20–30 minutes to help prevent dehydration.

carbohydrate alternatives

Remember, during illness there is no need to eat meat, protein or fat. There are minimal carbs, if any, in these foods and they may upset the stomach. Milk products and higher fat foods should also be avoided during vomiting and diarrhea.

Foods with approximately 15 g carbohydrates for sick day diet:

- ½ cup apple juice or other 100% fruit juice
- ½ cup 7Up, ginger ale
- 1 tablespoon honey or corn syrup (if child is 1 or older)
- 1 tablespoon jelly
- 8 Lifesavers®
- 1 tablespoon sugar
- 1 cup Gatorade
- 1 juice box (60 calories)
- 1 slice toast

Foods with approximately 15 g carbohydrates for sick day diet (continued):

- ½ cup cooked cereal
- 6 saltines
- ½ cup sweetened Jell-O®
- ½ cup ice cream
- ¼ cup sherbet
- ¼ cup sweetened pudding
- 1 sugar-free pudding pop
- 1 ¼ cup chicken noodle soup
- 1/3 cup frozen yogurt
- 1 cup cream soup
- 1 cup vegetable soup
- 8 animal crackers

