

Managing Illness

Type 2 Diabetes

Taking oral medication or non-insulin injectable medication

When you are ill, especially if you have an infection and a high temperature, your body is less responsive to the insulin you produce naturally. Insulin is a hormone which controls your blood glucose. Being unwell therefore usually makes your blood glucose levels rise, even if you are eating less than usual.

Symptoms of high blood glucose levels may include:

- Thirst
- Passing more urine than usual
- Tiredness

You can continue taking most of your diabetes tablets or non-insulin injection if you are mildly unwell even if you are not eating. However, if you are severely unwell:

- If you are taking an SGLT2 inhibitor e.g empagliflozin (Jardiance), canagliflozin (Invokana), dapagliflozin (Forxiga) you should stop this until you are recovered.
- If you are taking metformin and you are vomiting or have diarrhoea, you should stop this medication until you are recovered.
- If you are taking a tablet which helps your body to produce more insulin, such as gliclazide, you may need to increase the dose or even need insulin injections for a short time while you are ill. You will need to replace meals if you are unable to eat normally (*see list below*).
- If you are injecting a non-insulin glucose-lowering medication (Victoza, Trulicity, Byetta) and develop acute abdominal pain, nausea and vomiting, stop the injections immediately and seek urgent medical attention.
- Contact your GP if you are able to check your blood glucose levels and find they are constantly higher than 15mmol/l (and this is not usual for you)

Checklist for when you are unwell.

There are some things you can do to manage your diabetes when you are unwell.

- Make sure you have enough:
 - Blood Glucose testing strips (within expiry dates)
 - Medication
 - Hypo remedies
- Drink plenty of fluids
- Rest
- Treat symptoms such as a high temperature with over the counter medicines such as paracetamol. Ask your pharmacist for sugar free cough syrups or lozenges
- Ask for help if you're not coping:
 - If you vomit for more than 4 hours or are unable to keep fluids down
 - If you become drowsy and/or breathless due to high blood sugars
 - If you have acute abdominal pain
- You can call your GP, Practice Nurse, NHS 111, CHOC or in an emergency 999
- Your local Diabetes Centre contacts are:
 - Cumberland Infirmary, Carlisle 01228 814780
 - West Cumberland Hospital 01946 523002

If you are struggling to eat and drink, see the list below for alternative food options which contain carbohydrates:

- Fruit juice
- Milky drinks/puddings
- 1 scoop of ice cream
- Tins of soup
- Yoghurt
- Porridge or cereal