

Diabetes and Sick Day Rules

Key points:

- Intercurrent illness is likely to cause deterioration in blood glucose control and, in those with type 1 diabetes, increases the risk of diabetic ketoacidosis.
- All patients with diabetes, whether type 1 or type 2 should be familiar with the 'Sick Day Rules'.
- Patients with type 1 diabetes should be provided with blood ketone test strips (eg Freestyle Optium β) to test their blood for ketones during illness.
- These strips are designed for use with the Optium and Optium Xceed meters.
- Checking the blood glucose level and for ketones in the urine is an important part of the assessment of any patient with diabetes who is unwell.
- Blood glucose levels are likely to be higher than normal even if the patient is not eating, is vomiting or has diarrhoea.

Seek medical or diabetes specialist nurse advice if:

- Vomiting and unable to keep down fluids.
- Hyperglycaemia (blood glucose level above 17.0 mmol/l) + ketones in urine (trace to small amount) or blood ketones 1.5 mmol/l or higher (consider hospital admission if blood ketones >2.0mmol/L).
- Unsure of what to do.

Admit to hospital if:

- Persistent vomiting.
- Not able to tolerate oral fluids.
- Dehydrated (or risk of dehydration).
- Hyperglycaemia (blood glucose level above 17.0 mmol/l) + ketones in urine (moderate to large amount) or blood ketones 3.0 mmol/l or above.
- Suspected diabetic ketoacidosis.