



Scan with your
smartphone to get an
e-version of this leaflet.
You might need an
app to scan this code.



Sick day rules for Type 1 diabetes in pregnancy

***Information for
patients and carers***

**Diabetes Centre
David Anderson Building
Foresterhill**

Scan this QR code or use the link below to go to the NHS Grampian Diabetes and Pregnancy website



www.nhsgrampiandiabetes.scot.nhs.uk/pregnancy/

How does illness affect my blood glucose levels?

When you're ill, your body is less responsive to the insulin you inject. Insulin is a hormone that controls your blood glucose level.

Being unwell, especially if you have an infection and high temperature, usually makes your blood glucose levels rise, even if you're eating less than usual.

You can also produce ketones when you're unwell. These are produced when your body can't use glucose for energy because your insulin injections aren't working properly. If ketones build up in your blood, this can quickly lead to a serious condition called diabetic ketoacidosis (DKA). This can occur very quickly in pregnancy and can be dangerous for you and your baby.

You can manage your diabetes effectively during illness, keep your blood glucose levels on or near target, and prevent the development of ketones by following the advice in this leaflet.

What are my blood glucose targets?

Before meals: 4 to 6 mmol/l

2 hours after meal: less than 7 mmol/l

Before bedtime: greater than 6 mmol/l

What should I look out for if I'm ill?

- Thirst
- Feeling and/or being sick
- High blood glucose levels (greater than target)
- Ketones in the blood higher than 0.6 mmol/l
- Fast and deep breathing
- Stomach pain
- Drowsiness
- Passing more urine than usual
- Sweet or metallic taste in mouth
- Others may notice your breath smells of acetone or pear-drops

Important things to do when you're unwell:

Always take your insulin.

Never stop taking your insulin.

- Tell someone you trust that you don't feel well – they can help you follow the rest of the rules.
- Test for ketones even if your blood glucose levels are normal.
- Keep well-hydrated by drinking water or other sugar-free fluids. Sip gently throughout the day (at least 2½ to 3½ litres or 4 to 6 pints in 24 hours).
- You may wish to consider over the counter medicines such as painkillers and cough syrups to treat high temperature and cough or speak to a pharmacist for advice.
- Avoid strenuous activity. Get some rest.
- See your GP if you think you have an infection as you may need antibiotics.
- When you're unwell, your body uses a lot of energy even when you're resting. Try to eat as normal, but if you can't, replace your meals with light, easily-digested food such as soups and milky puddings.

Examples of light, easily-digested foods:

These portions contain approximately 10g carbohydrate.







	Fruit juice 100 ml
	Milk 200 ml
	Plain vanilla ice-cream 1 large scoop
	Tomato soup 200 gram (half a large tin)
	Low fat yoghurt 150 gram (1 small pot)
	2 Rich tea or malted milk biscuits

Diagram source: "Type 1 diabetes: What to do when you are ill" TREND-UK (February 2018)

- Increase your blood glucose testing to 2 hourly while you're unwell. If your blood glucose is over 10 mmol/l, you will need extra fast-acting insulin (such as Novorapid, Humalog, Apidra, Humulin S and Actrapid)
- To calculate how much extra insulin to take, test for ketones in your blood.

Understanding your blood ketone levels:

- Less than 0.6 mmol/l is normal
- More than 0.6 mmol/l means you may be at risk of developing DKA, therefore **please contact Maternity Triage on 01224 558855.**

If blood glucose is more than 10 mmol/l and blood ketones are less than 0.6 mmol/l, then take your usual correction dose.

Usually 1 unit of quick-acting insulin will bring you down to between 2 and 3 mmol/l.

If you use an insulin pump, please read the insulin pump safety card for information about managing your ketones.

When should I seek help?

Seek urgent medical help if your readings remain high, or you feel very unwell and you're not sure what to do.

Phone Maternity Triage urgently if any of these apply to you:

- If you are pregnant and have ketones greater than 0.6 mmol/L
- You have reduced foetal movements
- If you vomit for the duration of 2 meals (i.e. 4 hours) and can't keep fluids down
- If you have persistent ketones despite increasing your insulin
- If you become drowsy and/or breathless
- If you have acute abdominal pain
- If your condition worsens despite following the advice in this leaflet

Call 999 if your breathing becomes rapid and deep or if you feel drowsy. **These are signs of diabetic ketoacidosis - a life-threatening emergency.**

If you need to go to hospital, remember to take a list of all your medications and your insulin with you.

Key points

- Make sure you always have plenty of insulin and blood glucose and ketone monitoring equipment available.
- Make sure your ketone strips are still in date if you have not used them in a while.
- Never stop your insulin.
- Check for ketones if blood glucose is over 10 mmols and if you are unwell.
- Check for ketones if you feel unwell, even if blood glucose levels are normal for pregnancy.
- Sip sugar free fluids.
- If your ketones are greater than 0.6 mmol/l, **contact Maternity Triage**
- If you start vomiting, are unable to keep fluids down, or are unable to control your blood glucose or ketone levels, you must seek urgent medical advice. **Contact Maternity Triage on 01224 558855**

Your current insulin doses

Insulin	Breakfast	Lunch	Evening meal	Bedtime
Long acting (Lantus/Levemir) Units		 Units
Quick acting (Novorapid/Humalog) Units Units Units Units

Correction dose =Units (for example 1 unit for 3 mmol/l)

Useful contact details:

Maternity Triage

☎ 01224 558855

NHS 24

☎ 111

Your GP:



.....

Scan the QR code or use the link below to go to the NHS Grampian Diabetes and Pregnancy website



www.nhsgrampiantiabetes.scot.nhs.uk/pregnancy/

This leaflet is also available in large print.

Other formats and languages can be supplied on request. Please call Quality Development on 01224 554149 for a copy. Ask for leaflet 1873.

Feedback from the public helped us to develop this leaflet. If you have any comments on how we can improve it, please call 01224 554149 to let us know.