University Hospitals
Coventry and Warwickshire
NHS Trust

Paediatric Diabetes

Paediatric Diabetes - Illness and Diabetes

Any illness can upset the control of your diabetes:

- Your blood glucose level may rise without there being any change in the carbohydrate food that you eat, or in the amount of the usual insulin that you take
- However, in some children illness may cause the blood glucose to go down initially (just before the illness)
- If you are ill you need to rest
- A high temperature may be treated with paracetamol

It is very important when you are ill to:

- Never stop taking your insulin
- Test your blood glucose more regularly
- Test for Ketones (see Ketone testing information leaflet)
- Drink plenty of fluids
- Rest
- **Make early contact with your Diabetes Nurse**

Insulin

Do not stop taking your insulin, the cells in your body still need insulin to work properly, even if you cannot eat your normal food, or you are being sick.

- Test your blood glucose more often
- Extra insulin may be needed to control high blood glucose levels

- Less insulin may be needed to control low blood glucose levels
- You should contact the diabetes nurse, who will give you advice

Always check your blood for ketones (they can make you sick)

Ketones are released when body fat is broken down to produce energy.

There may be a smell of ketones on the breath (similar to the smell of pear drops or nail varnish remover)

If ketones build up, your body will be unable work properly. This will lead to deep rapid breathing, and possibly unconsciousness. This is known as Diabetic Ketoacidosis or DKA (This is life threatening and requires **urgent** medical attention)

Please read the Ketone Testing information leaflet.

Coping with illness

- If possible, try to eat your normal amount of food (carbohydrates)
- If you cannot eat your normal meals, you need to prevent your blood glucose from dropping too low, replace starchy carbohydrate food with some easy to eat or sugary foods (please see list)
- You may need less insulin if your blood glucose levels decrease
- If you cannot eat or you are vomiting, replace your meals and snacks with hourly sugary drinks, which should be sipped slowly
- You will also need to drink plenty of sugar free drinks in addition to fluid meal replacements to prevent you from becoming dehydrated (especially if you have diarrhoea.)

Food and drink to replace normal meals and snacks

The following list of foods contain approximately 10 grams of carbohydrate each

Fluids

Original Lucozade 60 ml / 2 fl oz
Original Cola/Pepsi 90 ml / 3 fl oz
Ordinary Lemonade 150 ml / 5 fl oz
Natural unsweetened fruit juice 100 ml / 4 fl oz
Sunny Delight 100 ml / 4 fl oz
Milk 200 ml / 7 fl oz

Take care to measure fluids accurately

Food

Soup – tinned varieties 200 ml / 7fl oz
Ordinary fruit yogurt ½ carton (150g)
Natural Yogurt 1 carton (150g)
Diet yogurt 1 carton (150g)
Ordinary fromage frais 1 small pot (60g)
Angel Delight (sugar free) 1 small bowl
Tinned rice pudding (sugar free) 1 small bowl
Custard (sugar free) 1 small bowl (100ml)
Portion of cereal 1 Weetabix, 1 small bowl of porridge, or cornflakes
Plain biscuits 2 (Marie, Rich Tea)
Plain biscuit 1 (digestive, Hobnob)
Sugar/Glucose 2 teaspoons
Glucose tablets 3 tablets
2 Jelly cubes

Choose 1 – 2 items to replace a snack
Choose 3 – 4 items to replace a meal

Our tips

- During an illness do not stop taking insulin

- Test for blood ketones
- You will need to drink extra sugar free fluids throughout the day to prevent dehydration
- Avoid sugary lozenges and syrup/sugar type medicines

  (Ask the pharmacist for sugar free alternatives)
- **If vomiting repeatedly or you are unable to keep any food or drink down, contact your diabetes team immediately for advice**

Please contact your diabetes nurse on 024 7696 7230 if you feel that you need help.

The Trust has access to interpreting and translation services. If you need this information in another language or format, we will do our best to meet your needs. Please contact the Department on 024 7696 7230.

The Trust operates a smoke free policy.

Did we get it right?

We would like you to tell us what you think about our services. This helps us make further improvements and recognise members of staff who provide a good service.

Have your say. Scan the QR code or visit:
www.uhcw.nhs.uk/feedback

Document History	
Department:	Paediatric Diabetes
Contact:	27230
Updated:	November 2025
Review:	November 2027
Version:	8
Reference:	HIC/LFT/550/07