

Managing your diabetes treatment:

Oral diabetes tablets and non-insulin injections

Continue to take your medication as usual, even if you are not eating. **HOWEVER** there are some exceptions:

- **If you are vomiting**, have diarrhoea or are dehydrated, **STOP** taking metformin and SGLT2 inhibitors (dapagliflozin, canagliflozin and empagliflozin).
- If you develop **acute abdominal pain and/or vomiting** and are using a daily or weekly non-insulin injection (exenatide weekly or twice daily, liraglutide, lixisenatide, dulaglutide), **STOP** and seek urgent medical attention.
- If you are **eating less than usual** and **take gliclazide or glimepiride**, monitor your blood glucose more frequently as these tablets can cause a “hypo” (low blood glucose). You may need to lower the dose if this occurs.

When to seek help

- If you are pregnant.
- If you become drowsy and breathless.
- If you have acute abdominal pain.
- If you have persistent vomiting, especially if you cannot keep fluids down.
- If your condition is worsening despite following the advice in this leaflet.

If you need to go to hospital, remember to take a list of your medications and insulin passport (if injecting insulin) with you.

Managing your diabetes treatment

Insulin

- **If your blood glucose is persistently higher than usual** (greater than 11 mmol/L), you will need to increase your insulin dose:

Blood glucose level	Additional insulin
11.1 to 17 mmol/L	Add 2 extra units to each dose
17.1 to 22 mmol/L	Add 4 extra units to each dose
Over 22 mmol/L	Add 6 extra units to each dose

- **If your blood glucose levels are much lower than usual**, reduce each insulin dose by 10% (e.g. if your usual dose is 20 units, **reduce by 2 units**. If your usual dose is 40 units, **reduce by 4 units**). Make sure you have “hypo” treatments available (e.g. dextrose tablets or Lucozade™).

Useful resources

- Diabetes UK: www.diabetes.org.uk
- TREND-UK has leaflets on a range of diabetes-related topics, which can be downloaded at: www.trend-uk.org

Type 2 diabetes: What to do when you are unwell

- **How does being unwell affect your diabetes?**
- **Looking after yourself**
- **What can you eat and drink?**
- **Managing your diabetes treatment**
- **When to seek help**

How does being unwell affect your diabetes?

- Illness, especially infections and high temperatures, makes your body less receptive to insulin (both your own natural insulin and insulin you may be injecting).
- Even if you are eating less than usual, being unwell usually makes your blood glucose rise.
- Symptoms of high blood glucose include:
 - Thirst.
 - Passing more urine than usual.
 - Tiredness.
- Some illnesses do not have this effect and if your appetite is poor, your blood glucose levels may fall. If you treat your diabetes with gliclazide or glimeperide tablets or insulin injections, your blood glucose may fall too low and cause a “hypo”. See the leaflet on hypoglycaemia on www.TREND-UK.org/resources.
- Monitoring your blood glucose regularly will help you to manage your diabetes when you are unwell.

Looking after yourself

- **Rest** – blood glucose levels can rise further if strenuous exercise is undertaken.
- **Prevent dehydration** by drinking plenty of sugar-free fluids – sip gently throughout the day (at least 2½ to 3½ litres or 4 to 6 pints in 24 hours).
- **See your GP** if you think you have an infection as you may need antibiotics.
- You can **treat symptoms** such as a high temperature or coughs with over-the-counter medications, like pain-killers or cough syrups. These do not have to be sugar-free as they contain very little glucose. Ask your pharmacist for advice.
- If you are able to **monitor your blood glucose**, check at least 4 times daily while you are unwell. Contact your diabetes nurse or GP if your readings continue to be much higher than usual.

Continue taking your diabetes medication but see the advice overleaf if vomiting occurs.

What can you eat and drink?

Your body uses a lot of energy when you are unwell, even if you are resting.

It is important to still eat and drink some calories even if your appetite is poor.

The following table lists some useful substitutes if you are unable to eat your usual meals. Each suggestion is equivalent to 10 grams of carbohydrate (e.g. an egg-size potato, a small slice of bread or a tablespoon of cooked rice or pasta):

Types of food and drink	Quantity equal to 10 grams of carbohydrate
Lucozade Original™	50 mL
Fruit juice	100 mL
Non-diet cola	100 mL
Milk	200 mL
Ice-cream	1 large scoop
Complan™	3 level teaspoons as a drink
Ovaltine™ or Horlicks™	2 level teaspoons as a drink
Tomato soup	200 g (half a large tin)
Low-fat yoghurt	150 g (1 pot)
Rich tea or malted milk biscuits	2