

# Sick Day Basics

## What is a sick day?

Illness, injury, infection or stress that causes changes in blood sugar numbers.

## Key points of a Sick Day

- Give extra fluids
- Do frequent blood sugar checks
- Check urine for ketones
- Give insulin
- Treat symptoms
- Monitor food intake
- Keep track of sick day results

## Following the Sick Day Guidelines

- Ketone Testing every few hours
  - Body breaks down fat for energy to take care of illness
  - Ketone levels will determine the frequency of insulin correction doses
- Blood sugar checks are based on ketone status, whether correction doses have been given, previous blood sugars, safety of child and when the child is eating
  - When your child is able to eat and drink and has negative to small ketones-check blood sugar at least every 3-4 hours and may give correction dose
  - When your child is able to eat and drink and has moderate to large ketones-check the blood sugar every 2 hours and may give correction dose
  - If child is vomiting, blood sugars will need to be checked more often
  - If a correction dose is given make sure blood sugars are checked 2 hours after correction dose
  - If blood sugars are very high (>300), check blood sugars every 2 hours
  - If blood sugars are low (<80), check blood sugars every 15 minutes
- Extra Insulin may need to be given
  - Insulin resistance occurs due to stress on the body
  - Amount given is *usually* same as correction dose, but correction doses may be changed if child is very sensitive to fast acting insulin
- Hydration or fluid status
  - Remember people with diabetes get dehydrated 3 times faster than people without diabetes
  - Fluid is more important than food
- Food is important after 24 hours
  - If the child hasn't eaten many carbs for 24 hours, the body will start to look for other sources of energy and ketones can be made very quickly
- Keep a log of all events during a sick day
  - Write down exact times of blood sugars, ketone checks, food and fluid intake, insulin doses given, vomiting, diarrhea, other illness symptoms, other medications given, conversations with health care providers and directions given, followed, changed.
  - The more accurate the information we have, the easier it is to give specific instructions
- Call your child's primary care doctor for treatment of non-diabetes related illnesses
- Remember that the guidelines are just starting guidelines. If they aren't working, the plan needs to change. Please contact the clinic for instructions when you are unsure what to do during a sick day.

## **Sick Day Prevention and Anticipation**

- Keep up on who's been sick (family members, friends, classmates etc..)
- Get a flu shot every year
- Stay in good control-you will be less likely to develop ketones or DKA if you are in good control
- Have a sick day kit ready to go so you're not caught without necessary supplies
- Keep a copy of the sick day guidelines handy
- Fluid is more important than solid food
- Treat the illness
  - Call PMD if fever, sore throat, severe headache, or if you think they need to be seen for their illness
  - May use over the counter medicine (cough syrup, allergy medicine, Tylenol, Ibuprofen) as long as it is OK with your PMD
- Call the Diabetes Clinic if you are unsure of what to do
  - Sick day is an urgent call
  - Call the first time you experience a sick day with ketones
- Missing injections
  - One missed Lantus injection per week can cause an increase in A1c by as much as 1%
- Dosing too long after a meal
  - High blood sugars after eating and then low blood sugars 3-4 hours later. Creates a cycle of highs and lows

## **Other Causes for High Blood Sugars, Ketones and DKA**

- Injecting into lumps- review site rotation
- Expired insulin- review storage of insulin
- Carb counting errors- review carb counting
- Coming out of Honeymoon
- Hormones / Growth
- Illness
- Stress – both positive and negative

## **When to call about your sick child**

- Blood sugars and ketones stay too high or too low after treatments
- Your child cannot eat or drink
- Persistent vomiting or diarrhea
- Symptoms of dehydration start to show
- Not sure what to do

**Note: if symptoms persist you may need to go to the emergency room.** Please contact the diabetes doctor on call before going.