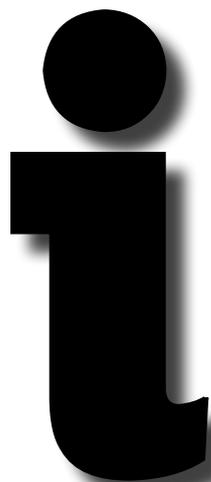


# ***Sick Day Rules for Adults with Diabetes who use insulin*** (page 1 of 2) **Feeling unwell?**



If you need your information in another language or medium (audio, large print, etc) please contact Customer Care on 0800 374 208 or send an email to: [customercare@salisbury.nhs.uk](mailto:customercare@salisbury.nhs.uk)

You are entitled to a copy of any letter we write about you. Please ask if you want one when you come to the hospital.

Please complete The Friends & Family Test to tell us about your experience at: [www.salisbury.nhs.uk/FriendsFamily](http://www.salisbury.nhs.uk/FriendsFamily) or download our App from the Apple App store or Google Play Store.

The evidence used in the preparation of this leaflet is available on request. Please email: [patient.information@salisbury.nhs.uk](mailto:patient.information@salisbury.nhs.uk) if you would like a reference list.

Name: James Lawrence  
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If you go down with a cold, flu or any other illness, here are a few simple rules you should always remember that may help you with those “Sick day blues”.

**Never stop taking your insulin even if you do not feel well and cannot eat.**

Your body needs insulin in order to transform the glucose supplied by the food you eat into the energy source your body’s cells need. However, even if you don’t eat, your body will produce glucose from its stores. If you stop your insulin you may then become ill, even seriously ill. Your dose however might need to be adjusted while you are sick. If you are unsure of how to do this, consult your healthcare professional.

**Measure your blood glucose level more frequently, at least 4 times a day, and adjust your insulin dose if necessary**

Your blood sugar will usually rise during illness especially with fever, so be prepared to increase your insulin dose as needed. Once you get better your insulin sensitivity will come back. You will then need to decrease your dose as soon as you see blood glucose values coming back into the normal range. Please speak to your health care professional if you are unsure about this.

**Try to drink plenty of liquids such as water or sugar-free drinks. At least 3 to 4 litres should be sipped through the day if possible**

Hyperglycaemia (high blood glucose) occurs more frequently during illness causing you to pass more urine, so that you can easily become dehydrated. Illness is also often associated with fever which accelerates fluid loss.

**If you don’t feel like eating solid food, try alternatives like milk, soup, cereals, ice cream, pudding, fruit juice or fizzy drinks.**

This will help to ensure that you are still taking your full carbohydrate allowance, balancing the insulin and helping to prevent the problem of vomiting which can sometimes occur if a full meal is eaten.

Try to keep an emergency store of these alternatives for use only when you are feeling ill:

- natural fruit juice
- diet fruit or plain yoghurt

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- drinking chocolate
- ice cream
- milk
- Lucozade
- thickened soup
- cola, lemonade or similar fizzy drink

**Test your urine for ketones and glucose frequently as it will give you the first warning of either a lack of insulin or carbohydrates**

The presence of both sugar and ketones indicates a lack of insulin. If you have only ketones you may not be getting enough food, specifically carbohydrates.

Call for help if:

- You are unsure about what to do
- You are vomiting
- You don't improve quickly
- Your blood glucose level remains high or, adversely low
- You are worrying

**Even though illness is not something you can plan in advance, try to be prepared and ask your doctor, practice nurse or diabetes nurse about what to do if you become ill.**

**MOST IMPORTANTLY, NEVER STOP TAKING YOUR INSULIN UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES.**