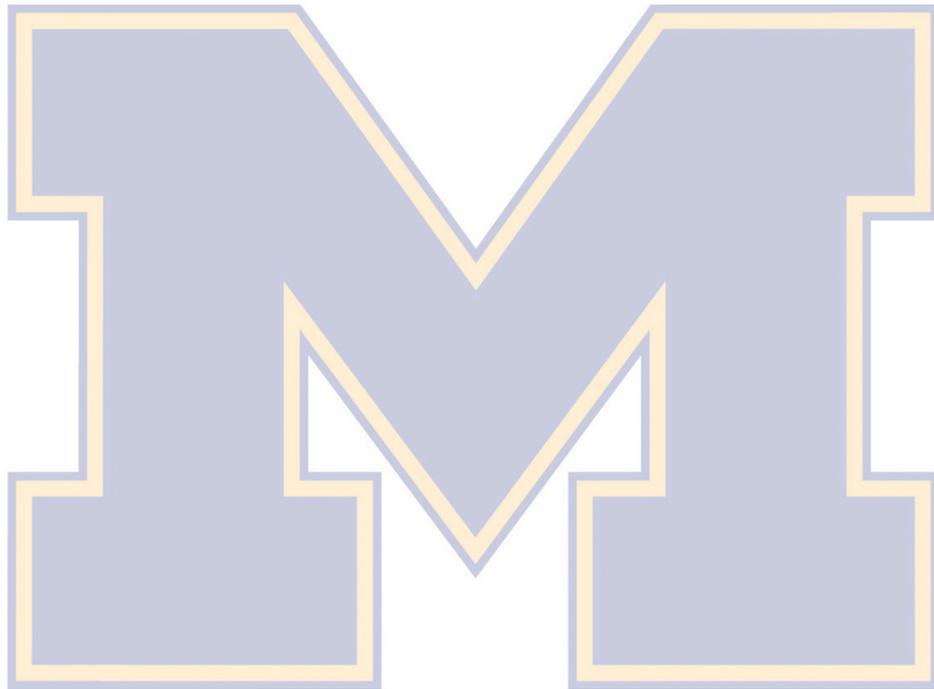


Newsletter #17



Taking Care of Yourself When You Are Sick

People with diabetes get the flu or a cold just like anyone else. But a cold, flu, infection or other illnesses can affect your blood sugar. So, even when you are sick, you still need to take care of your diabetes. Here are some ideas that will help you get better faster and keep you safe.

Check your blood sugar: Because an illness can raise your blood sugar, check more often (every 3 to 4 hours). Writing down the results along with your fever and symptoms will make it easier for you and your health care team to see what is happening.

Medicine: Even though you are ill, take your usual diabetes medicines. If you take long-acting take insulin, take your usual dose.

What to eat and drink: Your blood sugar will be easier to manage if you eat the same amount of carbohydrates (carbs) as usual. If you can, eat your usual meals. If you have a sore throat and cannot swallow, eat soft foods in place of your usual carbohydrates.

Drink some fluids every hour to help keep from getting dehydrated. If you are sick to your stomach or vomiting, drink enough liquids to equal the carbs in your plan. If you need to, spread your liquids out over the day by taking a sip every 15 minutes (or with each ad on TV). Drink fruit juice, tea with sugar, or *regular* soft drinks. Diet sodas will not work because they do not have any carbs.

Call your doctor right away if you have any of the following:

- blood sugar level over 250 mg/dL for more than one day

- vomiting for more than 6 to 8 hours
- a high or rising fever
- if you are sick for more than two days and not improving
- if you are unable to eat for more than one day
- signs of very high blood sugar levels
- you are very sleepy or confused
- you have stomach or chest pains, or difficulty breathing
- you have any concerns or questions

Have your records nearby when you talk to your provider. If you cannot reach your doctor, go to an emergency room. Call for help if you are alone and cannot take care of yourself.

After you get better: Even when you start to feel better you will need to check blood sugar more often than usual until you are completely well. You may want to eat liquids and soft foods until your appetite is back to normal. Remember, a cold, flu, infection or other illness can quickly raise your blood sugar. Paying careful attention to your diabetes will help keep you safe and help you to get better faster.

Ask your doctor or nurse the following questions:

1. When should I call you if I am sick?
2. What is the most important thing I can do to take care of my diabetes when I am sick?

Ask your dietitian the following question:

1. What foods are best to eat when I am sick, have a sore throat or I am sick to my stomach?