

DIABETES MANAGEMENT AND COVID-19

People with chronic health conditions, including diabetes, are considered to be at higher risk for COVID-19 complications. If a person with diabetes develops symptoms associated with COVID-19 (fever, cough, shortness of breath), they should continue taking their medication and contact a primary care provider.

The following fact sheet provides additional information that may be relevant for diabetes management during the COVID-19 outbreak.

Diabetes Management Topics of Interest	
<p>Access to medicines and insulin</p>	<p>The BC healthcare system, including FNHA Health Benefits, is aiming for continuity of service and ensuring that residents of BC have access to the medications and medical supplies that they need during the coronavirus outbreak.</p> <p>The BC Pharmacy Association does not recommend stockpiling medicines (BC Pharmacy Association, 2020). A 30-day supply is all that should be needed, even if an individual is needing to self-isolate. If your client is in need of a refill on their prescription or is running low on supplies, call the pharmacy ahead so they can be prepared for pick-up or deliver.</p> <p>FNHA Health Benefits has made temporary changes to some aspects of Health Benefits in response to COVID-19. If you want to find out more about these changes and how they might affect your clients, visit www.fnha.ca/benefits or call 1-855-550-5454.</p>
<p>Stress and impact on blood sugar</p>	<p>During stressful times, the body releases additional hormones. Hormones increase insulin resistance in the body (decreases the effectiveness of the insulin at the cellular level). The additional insulin resistance can lead to higher blood sugar levels. There are currently many aspects of the coronavirus situation that will increase individual and family stress. If a person with diabetes is monitoring blood glucose levels while dealing with significant stress, they may feel additional distress seeing their glucose levels rise.</p>
<p>Blood glucose monitoring and glycemic control</p>	<p>It is ideal to aim for blood sugars in the target range as much as possible, because blood sugars in the target range are helpful for avoiding infections. Routine blood glucose monitoring may be even more important during this time of either preventing illness or managing acute illness. As healthcare providers, we can support and encourage people with diabetes to begin, continue, or increase the frequency of checking blood sugars.</p> <p>Checking blood sugars in pairs is an important way to understand the association between two numbers (ADW Diabetes , 2015). The two most important pairs are before and after meals and before bed and after waking. Without the before blood glucose reading (before food or before bed), the</p>

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	<p>after reading doesn't provide much value. For more information on blood glucose monitoring and checking in pairs, visit HealthLinkBC and Accu-Chek.</p> <p>Since stopping the spread of the coronavirus is of utmost importance, it is important to remind people with diabetes to more frequently sanitize their blood glucose monitor and to wash their hands both before and after checking their blood sugar.</p>
Sick day management when feeling ill	<p>A slightly different approach to diabetes management may be necessary when a person with diabetes becomes ill. Concerns around dehydration, changes in diet, and risk for infection all need to be considered. Some medications, especially those with risk for hypoglycemia (low blood sugar), may need to be temporarily stopped. For more information about diabetes and sick day management, visit Diabetes Canada – Sick Day Management.</p>
Food security concerns/changes to diet	<p>Many individuals, families, and communities are experiencing additional concerns regarding food security. One possible scenario is that people are eating different foods than they usually eat, which can have an impact on blood sugars. While it may seem difficult to achieve balance in one's diet and self-management of diabetes during times of acute or prolonged stress and uncertainty, health professionals can play an important role in assuring people that they are doing great. Encourage people to choose foods and activities that they enjoy, which likely includes connections with culture and traditional foods.</p>

For more information, please consider checking the following trusted sources:

Diabetes Canada - [https://www.diabetes.ca/en-CA/campaigns/covid-19-\(coronavirus\)-and-diabetes](https://www.diabetes.ca/en-CA/campaigns/covid-19-(coronavirus)-and-diabetes)

BC Diabetes - <https://www.bcdiabetes.ca/wp-content/uploads/bcdpdfs/COVID-19--Diabetes-FAQ.pdf>

BC Pharmacy Association - <https://www.bcpharmacy.ca/news/bc-pharmacists-message-patients-medication-supplies-during-covid-19-outbreak>.

References:

ADW Diabetes . (2015, April 22). *Smart Monitoring – Testing in Pairs*. Retrieved from <https://www.adwdiabetes.com/articles/smart-monitoring-testing-in-pairs>

BC Pharmacy Association . (2020). *BC Pharmacists Message To Patients On Medication Supplies During COVID-19 Outbreak*.