



Diabetes Management and Coronavirus: Preparedness Tips

[The Diabetes Disaster Response Coalition \(DDRC\)](#), along with member organizations, is closely monitoring the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak.

This is a stressful time and people with all types of diabetes want to know what they can do right now to protect themselves and their families.

With public health officials increasing their call for everyone to help contain COVID-19, the DDRC recommends that people with diabetes create a preparedness plan and follow the guidance of local and national health authorities.

COVID-19 and similar viral illnesses—such as the flu—can pose a health risk for people with diabetes if they are infected with the virus. Those at greatest risk are people who have another, or second chronic disease (such as a compromised immune system, heart disease or renal failure).

Here are [tips from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#) to help you stay healthy and safe:

- Frequently wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands
- Practice social distancing. Keep a 6 foot distance between yourself and anyone who is coughing or sneezing.
- Stay at home if you are sick, or feel unwell
- Disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces throughout the day

If you have diabetes and contracted COVID-19, it is important to continue a normal schedule of medication. But there are important steps to take to avoid complications:

- Monitor your blood sugar and ketones more than usual. This is very important if you are not eating or drinking much, or if you are taking medication to address symptoms such as fever and muscle aches.
- It may be necessary to take extra insulin to bring down higher blood glucose levels.
- Be on the lookout for ketones, as very high levels could lead to diabetic ketoacidosis (DKA), a dangerous condition that demands immediate medical attention, and can be fatal if left untreated.
- If you are vomiting, or have moderate or large ketones or symptoms of DKA, contact your healthcare provider immediately and seek emergency assistance.

Other important information if you've contracted COVID-19

- Drink lots of fluids. If you are having trouble keeping water down, have small sips every 15 minutes or so throughout the day to avoid dehydration.
- If you are experiencing a low (blood sugar below 70 mg/dl or your target range), eat 15 grams of simple carbs that are easy to digest like honey, jam, Jell-O, hard candy, popsicles, juice or regular soda, and re-check your blood sugar in 15 minutes to make



sure your levels are rising. Check your blood sugar extra times throughout the day and night (generally, every 2-3 hours; if using a CGM, monitor frequently).

- Be aware that some CGM sensors (Dexcom G5, Medtronic Enlite, and Guardian) are impacted by Acetaminophen (Tylenol). Check with finger sticks to ensure accuracy.
- Wash your hands and clean your injection/infusion and finger-stick sites with soap and water or rubbing alcohol.

Take stock of supplies

The DDRC recommends that people with diabetes prepare for any emergency by assessing their medication and supply needs. Some insurers and pharmacies allow you to set up automatic refills, 90-day refills or mail-order or delivery of prescription medications. Call your pharmacy and insurance provider to determine options and assistance they provide. [More here about preparing your medications during emergencies like COVID-19.](#)

Prescription costs

If you are struggling to pay for insulin and diabetes medication, we have consolidated resources so that you can find help, fast. Get immediate help from your insulin manufacturer, find low (or no) cost options near you, consider drug discount programs and databases. DDRC partners have put together these resources that can be found on the following sites:

- [InsulinHelp.org](#)
- [American Diabetes Association](#)
- [JDRF](#)
- [Beyond Type 1](#)
- [American Association of Clinical Endocrinologists](#)
- [Association of Diabetes Care and Education Specialists](#)

Information on state-level emergency orders and prescription refill waivers

When a state issues an emergency order in response to the COVID-19 outbreak, the declaration may trigger a prescription refill waiver. These waivers allow pharmacists to refill prescriptions early if they deem a medication, such as insulin, critical to saving a person's life or maintaining their treatment plan.

For further details, [Healthcare Ready](#) advises people to follow their local health department on social media for postings on waivers. You can check your local Board of Pharmacy [website](#) for more information, and call your local pharmacy and health insurer for updates. Healthcare Ready also provides a list of [current state-level emergency orders](#) with details on the status of waivers in addition to COVID-19 screening and testing.

Stay healthy and safe!

The DDRC will provide updates as the COVID-19 situation continues to evolve. Comprised of the nation's leading diabetes organizations, our priority is the health and safety of the diabetes community in times of emergency. If you have questions or need additional support, please call 1-800-DIABETES from 9:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. ET, Monday through Friday. For more information on the DDRC, visit us at www.diabetesdisasterresponse.org.