



Diabetes and COVID-19

There are a number of issues clinicians should consider when advising patients with diabetes during the current crisis. Patients with diabetes are more at risk of severe symptoms and complications than those with no long term condition, and blood sugar control may be particularly challenging if affected by the virus.

GMMMG have prepared a document with some useful information [here](#), but a brief summary is given below – as well as some additional information around SGLT-2 inhibitors and sick day rules.

Diabetes UK suggests that self-isolating patients with coronavirus symptoms:

- Home blood sugar monitoring (if practiced) may need to be more frequent.
- Should be aware of the signs of a hyperglycaemia, which include passing more urine than normal (especially at night), being very thirsty, headaches, tiredness and lethargy. This is particularly where blood sugar monitoring is not carried out at home. Patients should contact their GP practice if they have hyper symptoms.
- For patients with type 1 diabetes, blood sugar should be checked **at least every four hours**, including during the night, and ketones checked. If blood sugar is high (generally 15mmol/l or more, or 13mmol/l if an insulin pump is used, noting different personal targets may have been set) or if ketones are present, the relevant diabetes team should be contacted.
- If an SGLT-2 inhibitor is taken (such as canagliflozin, dapagliflozin, empagliflozin and ertugliflozin) and the patient becomes unwell, **they should stop taking these**. A ketone and blood sugar check should take place where possible and they should contact their healthcare team. This is due to the increased risk of developing diabetic ketoacidosis (DKA).

Stepping Hill Hospital is seeing an increasing numbers of patients with Type 2 diabetes on SGLT2 inhibitors coming in to hospital with DKA due to the COVID crisis. Please ensure patients are familiar with the appropriate sick day rules to prevent this occurring. Below is a document from *NHS London Clinical Networks* addressing how to manage Type 2 diabetes if patients become unwell with coronavirus, and what to do with their medication.



3.-Covid-19-Type-2-
Sick-Day-Rules-Crib-S

Patient information around Sick Day Rules can be found on the Diabetes UK website [here](#), or two leaflets are available from TREND:



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- [Type 1 Diabetes: What to do when you are ill](#)
- [Type 2 Diabetes: What to do when you are ill](#)

Treatment with an SGLT-2 inhibitor may be restarted when the ketone values are normal and the patient's condition has stabilised (MHRA alert [here](#)).

Many patients have also been diagnosed with diabetes whilst in ICU following stress hyperglycaemia, and have been started on insulin and discharged. **Please be vigilant of any patient returning home on insulin who was not on it prior to admission**, as these patients should be prioritised for review to ensure continued appropriate treatment. Similarly, patients who have had any of their diabetes medications changed due to illness, but have now recovered will need review. The Stockport DSN team are happy to answer any queries to support these reviews where confirmation of appropriate treatment is required (snt-tr.DiabetesTeam@nhs.net).

Useful links:

Diabetes UK – Diabetes and Coronavirus

- https://www.diabetes.org.uk/about_us/news/coronavirus

GMMMG – COVID 19 Information and Resources

- http://gmmmg.nhs.uk/html/covid-19_information_resources.html

NHS England Clinical guide for the management of people with diabetes during the coronavirus pandemic:

- <https://www.england.nhs.uk/coronavirus/wp-content/uploads/sites/52/2020/03/speciality-guide-diabetes-19-march-v2-updated.pdf>

NHS Diabetes Prevention Programme – letter regarding changes in COVID 19:

- https://www.england.nhs.uk/coronavirus/wp-content/uploads/sites/52/2020/03/Adaptations-to-the-NHS-Diabetes-Prevention-Programme_19-March.pdf

Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation Ltd (JDRF) – Patient info COVID and T1DM:

- <https://jdrf.org.uk/coronavirus-covid-19-information-for-people-living-with-type-1-diabetes/>

Association of British Clinical Diabetologists (ABCD):

- <https://abcd.care/coronavirus>



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