

Managing other conditions

Diabetes

What happens if I have already got Diabetes?

People with diabetes are at no more risk of catching COVID than anyone else but if you do then you could become more ill; this is why you are 'classed' as high risk. This is the same for all types of diabetes (Type I, Type II and gestational). People with diabetes can be more vulnerable to becoming unwell. There is a new dedicated helpline for people with diabetes to access information by the health service in England.

If you do become ill, this may affect your blood sugars (mainly higher readings). This is due to the body trying to fight the virus. The body releases glucose (sugar) to help give you energy but cannot produce enough insulin to cope with this, resulting in higher glucose levels.

In most cases, the main symptoms for COVID-19 are mild flu-like symptoms. These can include a high temperature, dry cough, shortness of breath (trouble breathing), feeling tired, muscle aches, headaches and a loss of taste and smell. The way the virus affects people will vary from person to person.

Are there any special measures I should take?

To help stop the spread of COVID, it is important to follow government guidance and wash your hands frequently and follow the social distancing rules.

To help control your diabetes:

- If you already monitor your blood glucose levels, you will need to check these more often. If you are noticing higher levels, speak to your diabetes team for further advice.
- If you have been advised to check your blood glucose levels, make sure you have an extra supply of your glucose monitoring equipment plus supplies.
- Keep well hydrated by drinking regular fluid throughout the day (aim for 6-8 glasses per day).
- Look out for symptoms 'The 4Ts' – toilet, thirsty, tired and thinner are symptoms of raised blood glucose levels. If you are experiencing these symptoms, speak to your diabetes team or get advice from you GP (or 111 out of hours). Left untreated, these may get worse and lead to a life-threatening diabetic emergency, diabetic ketoacidosis or 'DKA', if you feel very unwell, call 999.

- For further information on diabetic ketoacidosis: www.diabetes.org.uk/guide-to-diabetes/complications/diabetic_ketoacidosis

If you have any concerns or queries it is really important that you contact your diabetes specialist nurse or General Practitioner (GP).

Medication

It is important that you continue taking medication that has been prescribed to you. Otherwise this could have an effect on your overall condition and possibly make you feel worse. If you have any concerns or queries about your medication please speak to your local pharmacist or your GP. Your local surgery or pharmacist can organise a delivery for you.

If you are on insulin, make sure that you have a one month supply.

If you do need to be admitted to hospital, please remember to bring an up to date list of your medication with you.

Hospital Appointments

Hospitals have had to postpone many non-urgent appointments and planned procedures due to the coronavirus outbreak. These decisions have been in line with national guidance, and you will be offered another appointment when it is safe to do so.

Patients should be contacted by their local hospital teams to see how their appointment has been affected.

Some of the appointments may go ahead and will be offered either face to face (urgent) appointments or via the telephone.

If you are unsure what has happened to your appointment then please contact your local hospital switchboard or ring the number on the appointment letter.

However, it is important to remember that you should not attend if you have any symptoms of COVID, or have suffered with sickness or diarrhoea in the last 48 hours.