Sick Days/Ketone Management

What are ketones? Ketones are a waste product of fat breakdown. When your body does not have enough insulin to move glucose into the cells for energy, the cells are hungry. The body responds by breaking down fat for energy, which can result in ketones in your blood and urine.

Why check for ketones? Checking ketones is VERY important! A high level of ketones in the body can lead to diabetic ketoacidosis (DKA), which can be serious.

When to check for ketones? • When the blood glucose is over 250 twice in a row • When your child is sick, regardless of the blood glucose numbers • When your child is vomiting

How to check for ketones in urine or blood

Urine ketone check
1. Apply a drop of urine onto the square tip of the ketone strip
2. Compare the strip color with the color chart on the bottle in exactly 15 seconds

When you open a new bottle of ketone strips write today’s date on the bottle. Once opened, they are good for 2 to 6 months depending upon manufacturer.

Blood ketone check
1. Put ketone strip into meter and apply a drop of blood
2. Compare the meter reading to the chart below

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Negative, trace or small</th>
<th>Below 0.6 mmol/L</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>0.6 to 1.5 mmol/L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large</td>
<td>Above 1.5 mmol/L</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To Learn More
• Endocrinology 206-987-2640
• Ask your child’s healthcare provider
• seattlechildrens.org

Free Interpreter Services
• In the hospital, ask your nurse.
• From outside the hospital, call the toll-free Family Interpreting Line, 1-866-583-1527. Tell the interpreter the name or extension you need.
How to Dose for Ketones

Check for ketones when:
- Blood glucose is over 250 mg/dL twice in a row
- Child is sick, regardless of blood glucose numbers
- When child is vomiting

When your child has **moderate or large ketones**, they will need extra insulin to clear the ketones. Please refer to the table below for dosing guidelines.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ketone Level</th>
<th>Action to Take</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Negative, Trace or Small | If blood glucose is above range:  
- Give usual correction dose for high blood glucose  
- Drink extra water  
- Check blood glucose and ketones every 3 hours until ketones are negative |
| Moderate             | If blood glucose is above 200:  
- Give usual correction dose \( \times 1.5 \) = insulin dose to give  
- Drink extra water  
- Check blood glucose and ketones every 3 hours until ketones are negative  

If blood glucose is under 200:  
- Give sugary liquids like Gatorade (do not cover with insulin)  
- Recheck blood glucose every 15 minutes until blood glucose is above 200, and then give extra insulin for moderate ketones. |
| Large                | If blood glucose is above 200:  
- Give usual correction dose \( \times 2 \) = insulin dose to give  
- Drink extra water  
- Check blood glucose and ketones every 3 hours until ketones are negative  

If blood glucose is under 200:  
- Give sugary liquids like Gatorade (do not cover with insulin)  
- Recheck blood glucose every 15 minutes until blood glucose is above 200, and then give extra insulin for large ketones. |

If child wants to eat, make sure it is at the same time you are giving corrections and not in between.

If ketones continue to be large after 6 hours, call the diabetes urgent pager at 206-987-2000.
When Your Child with Diabetes is Sick

When your child is sick with a cold or flu:

- Ketones are more likely to develop no matter what the blood glucose levels are. Blood glucose levels may rise due to the stress response of illness.
- More insulin may be required to prevent or treat ketones.
- You will need to keep enough insulin and carbohydrates in the body to help fight the infection.

Follow these guidelines when your child is sick:

- Check blood glucose every 3 hours until your child has negative ketones for 24 hours.
- Check ketones every 3 hours until your child has negative ketones for 24 hours.
- Stay hydrated. Give your child lots of liquids.
- Always give long-acting insulin (Lantus, Basaglar, Levemir, Tresiba), even if your child is not eating.
- Refer to the Ketone Management Flowchart for instructions on dosing insulin.

When your child is vomiting:

- Give small sips (1 tablespoon) of clear sugar-containing liquids (like Ginger Ale or Gatorade) every 15 minutes.
- If there is no vomiting after 30 minutes, increase the amount of liquids to 2 ounces (1/4 cup) every 15 minutes.
- If vomiting restarts, rest your child’s stomach for another hour and then restart the small amount of liquids.
- Continue checking blood glucose and ketones every 3 hours and refer to the Ketone Management Flowchart for instructions on insulin dosing.

What are the warning signs to seek help?

Go to the Emergency Department if your child has large ketones and any of the following symptoms:

- Chest heaviness
- Trouble breathing
- Change in mental status
- Severe stomach pain
- Your child is too dehydrated to check for urine ketones
- Your child has vomited twice and can’t keep anything down.

If uncertain about any of these instructions, please page endocrine/diabetes provider at 206-987-2000.