

## Patient information

# Patients with diabetes undergoing surgery or procedures requiring a period of fasting

*If you are unsure and/or need to clarify your Diabetes medication instructions please contact the Pre-Admission Unit nurses on 01284 712810. If you need to speak to a diabetes surgical specialist nurse leave a message on the above number and they will call you back in the next few days.*

Before your operation or procedure, **please follow the diabetes medication instructions** given at the Pre-Admission Unit, documented in your medication advice letter.

It is important to follow the eating and drinking instructions on your hospital letter inviting you for your surgery; **please do this** or it may affect you proceeding with your surgery.

If you test your blood sugars, **please check on waking and hourly** until you arrive on the ward and bring the results with you.

## How will this pre-operation starvation affect my diabetes?

With good planning your blood sugar should not be affected too much. However starving before a procedure may increase the risk of a low blood sugar ("hypo" - CBG < 4 mmol/L).

**Please follow these instructions if you experience a low blood sugar,** symptoms include:

- sweating

- dizziness
- blurred vision or
- shaking

Please test your blood sugar if you are able to do so. If your blood sugar is less than 6 mmol/L either take Dextragel or 4 glucose/dextrose tablets. Re-test CBG 10 minutes later to ensure increasing.

**BUT** please tell hospital staff on arrival that you have done this because it is possible that your surgery may have to be delayed or rearranged for another day for your safety.

Do not drive on the day of your operation, the following day or until you have been advised it is safe to do so according to the surgeon's advice.

When you travel to and from the hospital for your operation/procedure, please carry dextragel, some glucose tablets or a sugary drink with you. **Remember** the DVLA states your blood sugar needs to be 5 mmol/l or above to be able to drive.

## What do I need to bring with me to hospital for my diabetes?

- All your diabetes medication including insulin, syringes, needles and cartridges, pump consumables and any other tablets in their original boxes.
- Any blood testing equipment that you use at home e.g. meters, strips and record book with readings (if you usually monitor your blood glucose).
- Hypo treatment - glucose/dextrose tablets.
- Please ensure you take responsibility for any used needles while an inpatient and **directly dispose of them into a sharps box yourself**.

## On arrival at the hospital

Please inform the greeting nurse you have diabetes. Your blood sugar will be checked and if it is between 6mmol/l and 12mmol/L your operation will be able to go ahead from a diabetes perspective. However if it falls outside this range it will be treated as appropriate, but if your blood sugar does not stabilise we may need to postpone your operation; this is an anaesthetist/surgeon decision, for your safety.

## What happens after my operation?

- Your blood sugar will be checked regularly during and following your procedure.
- Once you are awake and free from nausea (sickness) you should eat the light snack/meal offered to you. Please inform staff if you feel nauseous at any time.
- With the next normal meal, you should take your usual diabetes medication unless advised not to.
- If you are ready to be discharged before your next meal is due, you will be allowed to go home providing you have eaten the light snack and are not suffering from nausea or sickness. Please return to your usual eating pattern.
- Your blood glucose may be higher than usual for a day or so, therefore please test your blood sugar more regularly if you are able until blood glucose levels are within range and stabilised.

## What should I do if I am unwell? (sick day rules)

- **NEVER** stop taking your insulin or tablets unless under medical advice – illness usually increases your body's need for insulin.
- **TEST** your blood glucose level every 2 hours, day and night, if you have the equipment to do this, until they are stable. If your blood sugar is higher than 15mmol/L seek medical advice.
- **TEST** your urine for ketones every time you go to the toilet or your blood ketones every 2 hours if you have the equipment to do this. If the urine ketones go over 1.5mmol/L or urine ++2 – **SEEK MEDICAL ADVICE IMMEDIATELY**. If you blood ketone test, follow the “traffic light” system.
- **DRINK** at least 100mls water/sugar free fluid every hour – please drink well (non-alcoholic) during illness and keep hydrated.
- **REST** and avoid strenuous exercise as this may increase your blood glucose level during illness.
- **EAT** as normally as you can. If you cannot eat or if you have a smaller appetite than normal, replace solid food during illness, with one of the following:
  - 400 mls of milk
  - 200 ml carton fruit juice

- 150-200 ml non-diet fizzy drink (non-reduced sugar)
- 1 scoop ice cream

## When should I call the Diabetes Specialist Nurses or my GP about my Diabetes?

- If you feel nauseated or vomit and unable to keep food down for 4 hours.
- Continuous diarrhoea and vomiting, and/or high fever or wound infection.
- High blood sugars and you feel unwell (more than 15mmol/L may indicate you need more insulin. **TEST** your ketones if CBG 12 mmol/L or more.
- Urine ketones ++2 or higher or more than 1.5mmol/L blood ketones – seek **IMMEDIATE** diabetes management advice.

**If you become unwell contact your usual diabetes team, either at your GP surgery or at the hospital. In an emergency, call your GP, attend the Emergency Department or call for an ambulance if indicated. If you are unwell due to the surgery you have just had, please follow your surgical discharge advice.**

*If you would like any information regarding access to the West Suffolk Hospital and its facilities please visit the website for AccessAble (the new name for DisabledGo)*  
<https://www.accessable.co.uk/organisations/west-suffolk-nhs-foundation-trust>



West Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust