



Corona Virus (COVID-19) and Diabetes – Q & A

The American Diabetes Association (ADA) recently posted an informative list of answers to ‘Frequently Asked Questions’ around diabetes and the pandemic COVID-19 virus. Here are *CDE adaptations* of some of the posted answers - we have added some emphases and comments to highlight some *important principles you need to remember* when learning more about COVID-19:

Are people with diabetes more likely to get COVID-19?

There is not enough data to show that people with diabetes are *more likely* to get COVID-19 than the general population.

Do people with diabetes have a higher chance of experiencing serious complications from COVID-19?

The problem people with diabetes *may* face, is primarily a problem of *worse outcomes, not a greater chance* of contracting the virus. When people with diabetes *do not manage their diabetes well* and experience *fluctuating blood glucose levels*, they are *generally at risk for a number of diabetes-related complications*. And, *in general*, as a *population*, people with diabetes *do face a higher chance* of experiencing *severe symptoms* and *serious complications* when infected with *any virus* and *with COVID-19*.

But here is the VITAL disclaimer: *If your diabetes is well-managed, the risk of getting severely sick from COVID-19 is about the same as the general population.*

Are the risks different for people with type 1 and type 2 diabetes?

In general, we don’t know of any reason to think that COVID-19 will pose a difference in risk between the two types of diabetes. *More important is that people with either type of diabetes vary in age, complications and how well they have been managing their diabetes.*

People who *already have diabetes-related health problems* are likely to have worse outcomes if they contract COVID-19 than people with diabetes who are *otherwise healthy*, whichever type of diabetes they have. *This makes conscientious diabetes self-management even more vital than ever!*

A common question we get at the CDE is, should people with diabetes test their blood glucose more regularly during the COVID-19 pandemic?

Many factors determine how often any *particular person* with diabetes should test their blood glucose, including the *type of diabetes*, the *types of therapy* that person is on, their *level of physical activity* and *any occupational risks that require more frequent testing*. Your CDE diabetes team are there to guide you as to how often you should be testing and *if this frequency should be increased at this time*.

Generally, *if you are well*, your normal testing schedule should suffice, *whilst being more aware of any possible symptoms of a sore throat, fever, dry cough, shortness of breath or loss of taste or sense of smell*. Any such symptoms should provoke an *immediate blood glucose test (and ketone test if this has been advised by your diabetes team)*. CDE clients on our *full managed care Programmes* have the reassurance of a 24-Hour ‘Hotline’, to contact their diabetes team for support and guidance. Do so *earlier* rather than later!

Probably the most important *baseline test* of the day is your waking/fasting blood glucose reading. We know that infection with COVID-19 can result in *higher or lower* blood glucose values. If your fasting reading is different from usual without any clear reason, contact your diabetes team for guidance.

Obviously people with diabetes who have *contracted the virus* should ensure that they do regular and more frequent blood glucose tests, *as guided by their diabetes team* to ensure good control.

At this time, and *should you be able to afford it, continuous glucose monitoring (CGM)* may be an option for you and *may* reduce the number of finger pricks you have to do (depending on the system used). *If you are engaged in your diabetes self-care*, it certainly is the best way to learn how to manage the dynamic balance between blood glucose and life variables of activity, stress, potential infections, other medications and food eaten. Talk to your diabetes team to see if this is an option for you.

To see the full ADA list of questions and answers click [here](#), but *keep in mind the important principles* we have highlighted above.