

COVID-19 and diabetes

Information for families of children and adolescents with type 1 diabetes

In the current global situation concerning the novel coronavirus (COVID-19), we understand many families have questions about the risk to children with diabetes. Although specific information on the risk of contracting the virus for children with type 1 diabetes is limited, we believe the risk is similar to the rest of the general population. Children and adolescents with type 1 diabetes are not considered to be immunocompromised. There have been some messages in the media that people with diabetes are more susceptible to COVID-19; however this is more relevant to older people with both type 1 and type 2 diabetes (who often have additional health conditions / risks) and not children.

Recent reports in medical literature indicate that symptoms of Covid19 in people with Type 1 diabetes are similar to symptoms in those without diabetes. However, as with any generalised illness in children with type 1 diabetes, more marked fluctuations in blood glucose levels can result. As usual, if your child with diabetes becomes unwell, the sick day management plan that includes regular monitoring of glucose levels, ketones and insulin dose adjustments, should be followed. Diabetic ketoacidosis (DKA) is an additional risk for people with diabetes who become unwell with any infection; please remember if your child is unwell, ketone levels should be checked regularly (regardless of BGL). Call your GP for a medical review for any illness, based on the government recommendations for illnesses with fevers or respiratory symptoms. If your child has symptoms of possible Covid19, they should have a swab to test for this and should stay at home with limited contact with others until the result is known. More information can be found at <https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/coronavirus>

There continues to be no evidence that parents of children with diabetes should consider things differently to other families in regard to COVID-19. Standard precautions as for any respiratory illness are recommended. This includes taking extra care with frequent hand washing with soap and water or an alcohol based hand rub, covering coughs and sneezes and avoiding contact with anyone with flu like symptoms. [https://www.rch.org.au/rch/Coronavirus_\(COVID-19\)/](https://www.rch.org.au/rch/Coronavirus_(COVID-19)/)

General diabetes-related care during Covid-19 restrictions

Insulin:

With changes in routines as a result of current societal restrictions, your child's insulin requirements may change more than usual. As always, regardless of the possible underlying causes, if there is a pattern of BGLs being outside of the target range of 4 - 7 mmol/L pre meals (or time in range is <70% for those who also use CGM), an adjustment to the doses of insulin should be made to get most BGLs within the target range. **It is important to be proactive in making changes as needed. Please make time to look at the patterns in BGLs every week and make the necessary changes to insulin doses or pump settings.**

Exercise:

During this period of stage 4 restrictions, it is also important to remember to get outside each day to exercise; this is important for many reasons and is typically beneficial for BGLs.

Clinic appointments and HbA1c:

Diabetes clinic appointments will continue via telehealth during restrictions. Information on accessing telehealth will be sent out with the notice of your appointment. If you don't have Internet / a device then we can do the appointment by telephone – please let us know so we can arrange this.

Please remember the importance of continuing to get your Hba1c checked every 3-4 months. A pathology slip will be mailed to you.

[Please see HERE for further information](#)

Contact the diabetes team if you have questions, are unsure about insulin dose adjustment or have questions about your upcoming diabetes clinic appointment:
diabetes@rch.org.au or 9345 6661.

If you need to change your appointment time / day, please contact Specialist clinics – 9345 6180.

We recognise that families and children may be feeling stressed and anxious. We also recognise that the situation is changing rapidly and that recommendations are also changing. We will endeavour to deal with all queries as efficiently as we can and in a respectful manner. We also expect that families will interact with our staff in a respectful manner
<https://www.rch.org.au/your-rights/>.

The situation regarding COVID-19 is evolving and changing rapidly, so our understanding of the risks in relation to diabetes in children may change. Please keep up to date by accessing the Victorian Government Department of Health and Human Services website at
<https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/coronavirus>

For more health related information on COVID–19 please visit the Victorian Government Department of Health and Human Services website at
<https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/coronavirus>

For concerns regarding availabilities of insulin and other essential medicines and their National Diabetes Services Scheme (NDSS) products and supply, please refer to the Diabetes Australia: <https://www.diabetesaustralia.com.au/diabetes-medicines-and-products>