

CORONAVIRUS

(COVID-19) PGCHD Response Document



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DIABETES AND COVID-19

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT DIABETES AND COVID-19

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

People with diabetes are more likely to experience severe symptoms and complications when infected with a virus. If diabetes is well-managed, the risk of getting severely sick from COVID-19 is about the same as the general population.

When people with diabetes do not manage their diabetes well and experience fluctuating blood sugars, they are generally at risk for diabetes-related complications. Having heart disease or other complications in addition to diabetes could worsen the chance of getting seriously ill from COVID-19, like other viral infections, because your body's ability to fight off an infection is compromised.

Do I need to worry about DKA (diabetic ketoacidosis)?



When sick with a viral infection, people with diabetes do face an increased risk of DKA (diabetic ketoacidosis), commonly experienced by people with type 1 diabetes. DKA is a serious condition that can lead to diabetic coma (passing out for a long time) or even death.



DKA can make it challenging to manage your fluid intake and electrolyte levels—which is important in managing sepsis. Sepsis and septic shock are some of the more serious complications that some people with COVID-19 have experienced.



If your blood sugar has registered high (**greater than 240 mg/dl**) more than 2 times in a row, check for ketones to avoid DKA and call your doctor.

What are the symptoms and warning signs I should be watching out for—and what do I do if I think I'm developing them?

Pay attention for potential COVID-19 symptoms including fever, dry cough and shortness of breath. If you feel like you are developing symptoms, call a health care provider. When you call:



Have your glucose reading and your ketone reading available.



Keep track of your fluid consumption (you can use a 1-liter water bottle) and report.



Be clear on your symptoms.



Ask questions on how to manage your diabetes.

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

People with either type of diabetes vary in their 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.**

Having diabetes, what should I do to avoid complications from COVID-19?

As it relates to the COVID-19 outbreak, it follows that **maintaining optimal blood glucose control is an important preventative strategy for avoiding serious related complications**, such as a secondary bacterial infection (i.e., pneumonia) and is likely an important determinant in the patient prognosis for anyone who becomes infected.

What can I do to protect myself?

In addition to the importance of maintaining optimal glycemic control as a person with diabetes (see above), the best ways to protect yourself include the same important measures that are advocated by the CDC such as **staying home as much as possible, practicing excellent hand hygiene, keeping distance from people who are sick and avoiding touching your face.** Follow these tips below.

PRACTICE PREVENTION



Stay at home as much as you are reasonably able.



If you go out in public, maintain a distance of at least six feet from others.



Wash your hands often and every time you return home or use hand sanitizer.



Avoid touching your face, nose, and eyes.



Clean surfaces regularly.

BE RESOURCEFUL



Be sure to have enough essential medications to last for at least 1 month.



Create an emergency contact list of trusted people in your life who may be able to provide information or assistance.



Make plans to connect with your family and friends through video chat, phone calls or social media messages.



For further information visit health.mypgc.us/coronavirus or call (301) 883-6627.

Source: American Diabetes Association <https://www.diabetes.org/coronavirus-covid-19>