

Diabetic Ketoacidosis

The following is a plan of care designed by your doctor and nurses to help you in your recovery from an acute episode of very high blood sugar. It may vary as we tailor the plan to meet your specific needs. We will work together with you to have you ready to go home as soon as possible. Please discuss any questions or concerns you might have about this plan with us.

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On Admission

Your nurse will ask you questions about your health history, including allergies and a list of your current medicines. An IV (into the vein) line is started. It is used to give fluids and insulin. You will be weighed and your intake and output of fluids will be measured. Based on your condition, solid food or a liquid diet may be started.

To better care for you, certain tests are done:

- Chest X-ray
- Electrocardiogram
- Blood and urine tests

You may start out on bed rest. Later, as you begin to feel stronger, you may be up and about. Be sure to talk with your nurse before getting out of bed.

During Your Hospital Stay

Be sure to get plenty of rest. As your body begins to properly use food for energy, you will slowly feel less tired. Gradually increase your activity. The goal is to return to your normal activity level. Begin thinking about how to manage diabetes at home. Write down any questions.

You can expect:

- Daily weights and blood tests
- Fingerticks to check your blood sugar at least 4 times per day
- Your intake and output of fluids to be measured
- Your blood pressure, heart rate, temperature and breathing to be checked at least every 8 hours
- Insulin injections to begin (You may need more than 1 injection per day.)

Your healthcare team will give you information about managing diabetes at home:

- Meal plans
- How to give insulin and check your blood sugar
- How to handle high and low blood sugar

It is important to review this information. Look at your meal tray to check for types of food, how it is made and portion size. This should help you in meal planning at home or when eating out. Practice drawing up and giving insulin. You want to feel secure in this skill.

The Northwestern Memorial Video On-Demand system has videos that provide helpful information about diabetes care. Dial 6-5957 on your telephone or ask your nurse to help you use the system. Some important titles include:

English	Spanish
Title # 36: Healthy Food Choices	Title # 84: Healthy Food Choices
Title # 41: Monitoring Your Blood Sugar	Title # 83: Monitoring Your Blood Sugar
Title # 33: Understanding Insulin	Title # 79: Understanding Insulin
Title # 34: Injecting Insulin	Title # 80: Injecting Insulin

Write down and ask questions. You also can talk with your nurse. If you are unsure of what to ask or are having problems concentrating, talk to a diabetes educator (your nurse can arrange this).

Going Home

Before going home, your IV fluids are stopped. You should be able to draw up and give your own insulin injections (or have a family member who can perform them). It is important to know:

- How to monitor your blood sugar at home
- Your insulin dose
- Your diet plan
- How to manage high and low blood sugar
- Whom to contact regarding care after discharge
- About outpatient appointments with the doctor, the diabetes educator and the dietitian

When to Call the Doctor

If you note or have any of the following, please contact your doctor.

- Signs of high blood sugar such as: dry mouth, increased thirst and urination (especially at night) lasting for more than 2 days
- Signs of low blood sugar such as: shakiness or nervous feeling, sweating, rapid heart rate, lightheadedness or confusion that does not improve when you treat with sugar or eat food for more than 1 day
- Flu-like symptoms
- Nausea and vomiting and inability to keep down any food or fluids for more than 6 hours
- Temperature of 101° F or higher
- Injury to your feet (painless or not) including burns, splinters, blisters, redness, swelling, bleeding or oozing of fluid, or black and blue discoloration of the feet
- Blood sugar over or under “your” target range for more than 2 days
- Urine showing moderate to high ketones or if you have blood sugar over 240 mg/dl

If you have any questions after leaving the hospital, you may contact the Diabetes Education Service at 312-926-4980.

You also may contact the Wellness Institute at 312-926-WELL (9355) for additional diabetes education and nutrition counseling.

Health Information Resources

For more information, visit one of Northwestern Memorial Hospital's Health Learning Centers. These state-of-the-art health libraries are located on the third floor of the Galter Pavilion and on the first floor of the Prentice Women's Hospital. Health information professionals are available to help you find the information you need and provide you with personalized support at no charge. You may contact the Health Learning Centers by calling 312-926-LINK (5465) or by sending an e-mail to hlc@nmh.org.

For additional information about Northwestern Memorial Hospital, please visit our Web site at www.nmh.org.

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Developed by: Diabetes Education Service

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