

Type 1 diabetes

What to do when you are ill

How does illness affect your blood glucose?

- 1 When you are ill, your blood glucose levels may rise, even if you're not eating.
- 2 This can make you feel thirsty and need to pass urine more often, which can make you dehydrated. You may need to increase the dose of your insulin to combat this.
- 3 Your body can produce a substance called ketones when you're unwell, which can cause a serious condition called diabetic ketoacidosis.
- 4 It is possible to manage your diabetes when you're unwell and keep your blood glucose down by following the guidance in this leaflet

Meal replacement suggestions

Try to eat as normal but if you cannot manage your usual meals, replace with light and easily digested meals such as soups and milky puddings. See the table below for a list of alternative food options:

Type of food alternative	Each serving provides approximately 10g of carbohydrate		
Lucozade Energy™	120 mls	4.2 fl oz	
Fruit juice	100 mls	4 fl oz	½ glass
Cola (not diet)	100 mls	4 fl oz	½ glass
Lemonade (not diet)	100 mls	4 fl oz	½ glass
Milk	200 mls	7 fl oz	1 glass
Soup*	200 mls	7 fl oz	1 mug
Ice cream	50g	2 oz	1 large scoop
Complan®	3 level teaspoons as a drink		
Drinking chocolate*	2 level teaspoons as a drink		
Ovaltine® / Horlicks®	2 level teaspoons as a drink		

* Sugar quantities may vary according to brand. Keep sugary drinks at home for emergencies



Try to drink at least 2.5 litres (four pints) of sugar-free fluid every day



Avoid strenuous exercise



Treat symptoms such as a high temperature or cough with over the counter medicines.



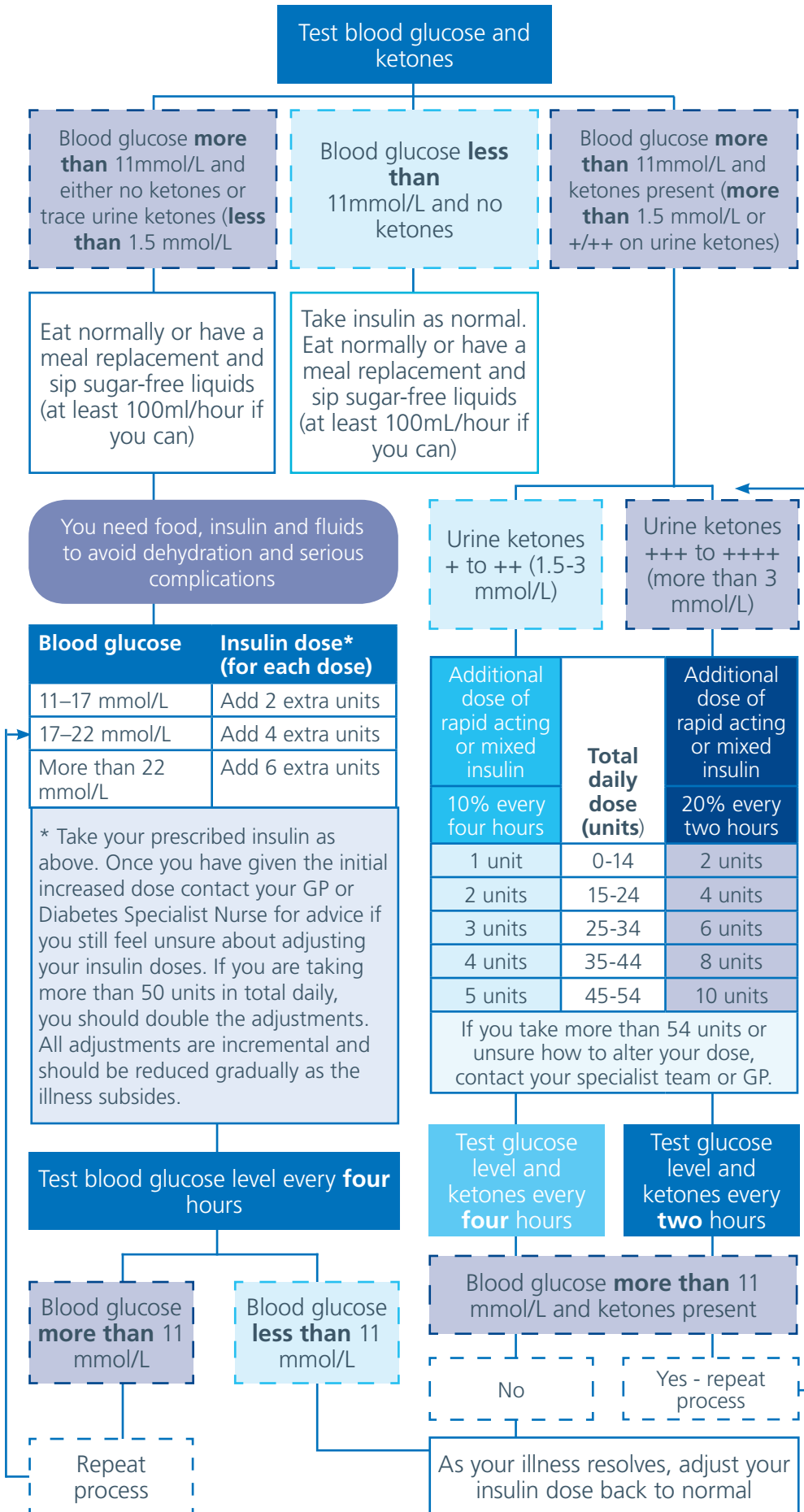

See your GP if you think you have an infection



Seek medical help if your readings remain higher than usual, you feel unwell or you're not sure what to do

Don't stop taking your insulin when you're unwell

Managing your insulin dose if you're ill

When to call your GP:

- If you are pregnant;
- You cannot keep fluids down;
- You have ketones and don't know how to adjust your insulin to manage this;
- Your symptoms get worse in spite of following the advice in this leaflet.



You must seek urgent medical advice if you start vomiting, are unable to keep fluids down or are unable to control your blood glucose or ketone levels

Test, monitor and record your blood glucose levels at least four times a day

If your glucose levels are higher than 11, you may need to increase your insulin dose. Contact your GP or nurse if you are unable to do this



If your blood glucose is lower than usual you may need to reduce your insulin dose

Don't stop taking your insulin, even if you are not able to eat

This algorithm has been adapted from Insulin self-adjustment advice. The Intermediate Diabetes Service, Enfield Community Services, BEH-MHT, 2012.