



Coping with Illness

Chloe's Story

Chloe has type 1 diabetes which is usually quite well controlled through multiple daily injection therapy (fast-acting insulin before meals and long-acting insulin in the evening). She started to feel a bit sniffly a few days ago and has noticed her glucose levels are sometimes – although not always – a bit higher. She's not sure if it's her cold that is making her feel tired and a bit irritable or if it's down to her higher blood glucose levels.

What should she do?

- As with Ryan, the key thing is to keep testing her blood glucose levels.
- Chloe is having occasional highs without any pattern to them so the best thing is to give herself correction doses. She should, however, be careful not to stack up on fast-acting insulin as this can cause hypos. Fast-acting insulin can work for 4–6 hours in your body, and the peak action time is 1–2 hours after injection so she needs to bear this in mind when calculating her correction dose.
- She should take sugar-free cold remedies to ease her symptoms.

A few days later she develops a bad cough. She sees her GP who tells her she has a chest infection and gives her antibiotics. People with diabetes often find that colds are more likely to develop into chest infections as their higher blood glucose levels can give the bugs more sugar to feed on, which makes the infection worse.

What should she do?

- Again, blood glucose testing is the important thing. She should test four times a day, more if she is giving herself correction doses (to make sure they are working). Keeping her blood glucose stable will help her to feel better generally.
- High blood glucose levels often go hand in hand with an infection needing antibiotics, so she may need to increase her long-acting insulin. She can give herself correction doses with her meal-time insulin, but she should be careful not to do this too often as it could stack up and cause a hypo.
- She should remember to test for ketones if her blood glucose is over 13 mmol/L (or over 13.9 mmol/L if she uses an insulin pump).

