

Managing Diabetes During Cancer Treatment

Many things can affect your blood sugar level such as medication, stress, illness or a change in diet. Cancer treatment can make it even harder to control your blood sugar if you take insulin or diabetes medications. Here are a few tips to help control your blood sugar level during treatment.

Hyperglycemia - High Blood Sugar (*Blood sugar greater than 11 mmol/L*)

Some steroids such as dexamethasone can increase your blood sugar levels. When you stop taking the steroids, your blood sugars may come down. Talk to your family physician if you have concerns.

What you may feel: Very thirsty and tired, need to urinate very often, blurred vision.

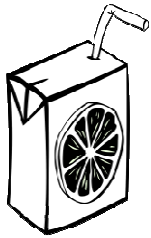
What you should do:

1. Monitor your blood sugar regularly.
2. Ask your doctor if you need to adjust your diabetes medication or insulin.
3. Do not eat less food to control your blood sugars. If you are eating very little and losing weight, you may be asked to have foods and drinks that contain more carbohydrate sugar and fat than you normally eat.

Hypoglycemia – Low Blood Sugar (*Blood sugar less than 4 mmol/L*)

What you may feel: Trembles, poor concentration, sweats, confusion, anxiety, weakness, hunger, headache, nausea, dizziness.

What you should do: 1. Eat or drink one of the following:



- 3 teaspoons of sugar dissolved in water.
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup of juice. Avoid citrus if you have sore mouth or throat.
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup of regular pop.
- 1 Tablespoon of honey
- 1 cup of milk.
- Glucose tablets. Follow package directions.

2. Recheck your blood sugar after 15 minutes.

3. If your blood sugar is still low – repeat Steps 1 and 2.

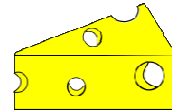
4. Once blood glucose returns to normal, eat a small snack if your next planned meal or snack is more than 1-2 hours away.

What should I eat if I am feeling nauseous?

Nausea, vomiting, and dehydration can cause low blood sugar levels. Plan ahead to help you cope with nausea by having some of the foods listed below on hand. Try to eat or drink 15 grams of carbohydrate every 1-2 hours. Examples include:

- 1/3 cup Grape juice
- 1/2 cup Apple or cranberry juice
- 1/2 cup Regular pop
- 1 Double stick Popsicle
- 1 cup Gatorade or sports drink
- 1 cup Milk or high protein milk
- (ask for recipe) 1 cup Chicken noodle soup
- 7-8 Soda crackers
- 1/2 cup Oatmeal
- 1 slice Bread/toast
- 1/3 cup Nutrition supplement drink (e.g. Boost Plus Calories, Ensure Plus Calories)

Whenever possible, have a protein food with your meals and snacks, such as cheese, peanut butter, yogurt or an egg.



Sample Meal Plan for People with Diabetes During Cancer Treatment

Time of Day	Food Ideas	Your Choice
Breakfast	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1/3 cup dry oatmeal made with 1 cup whole milk and added butter or margarine • 1 small banana • 1 tbsp peanut butter 	
Snack	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 hard boiled egg • 1 piece of whole wheat bread with butter or margarine 	
Lunch	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 cup cream soup made with whole milk 4 soda crackers crumbled into soup • 1/4 cup shredded cheese sprinkled on top of soup • 1/2 cup unsweetened applesauce, warmed and topped with cream and brown sugar 	
Snack	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1/2 bottle of "Plus Calories" nutritional supplement 	
Dinner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 ounces chicken, meat, or fish with sauce or gravy 1 cup mashed potatoes with butter and whole milk • 1 cup cooked, soft vegetables with oil or cheese sauce • 1/2 cup pudding made with whole milk 	
Snack	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 cup 2% cottage cheese <u>or</u> 1 cup full fat greek yogurt • 1/2 cup canned peaches 	

* The above meals contain 45–60 grams of carbohydrate. Snacks contain 15-30 grams of carbohydrate.

This information is not meant to replace the medical counsel of your doctor or individual consultation with a registered dietitian. This information may only be used in its entirety. Authorization given to reproduce this information with acknowledgement to Oncology Nutrition, BC Cancer Agency May 2015, developed by ON SAHCSI