

CORONAVIRUS DISEASE 2019 (COVID-19)



Guidance for people living with **TYPE 1 DIABETES**

For more info. on coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19)
Call: 16000, or visit: www.moph.gov.qa



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Who is this guidance for?

This guidance is for the people of Qatar living with type 1 diabetes and their families.

What is Coronavirus disease (Covid-19)?

Coronavirus causes a contagious disease with symptoms such as fever, coughing, and shortness of breath.

How do people get infected?

Like any other viruses that attack the respiratory system coronavirus is transmitted from one infected person to another in the droplets when they cough, sneeze, or speak, especially at a distance of less than two meters. It can also be transmitted through close contact with the infected person or by touching surfaces.

Are people living with diabetes at higher risk?

People with diabetes, as all those with chronic diseases, have less immunity than healthy people. When blood sugar is high, the cells that fight infection do not function to clear the infection allowing the infection to progress more quickly and severely.

People living with diabetes must take extra precautions and preventive measures to protect themselves from Coronavirus (Covid-19) infection and to stay safe.

How people living with diabetes can boost their immune system?

- Maintain your blood sugar readings at the target range agreed with your healthcare professionals (generally fasting blood sugar of 80-130mg/dl and post prandial sugar <180mg/dl). Your sugar targets depend on several factors including your age and duration of diabetes. Your healthcare professional will tell you what your targets should be.
- Remain well hydrated by drinking plenty of water;
- Have a balanced diet, consisting of 3 meals and snacks as indicated by your healthcare professionals.
- Ensure you have taken all required annual vaccinations such as flu and pneumococcus.
- Maintain regular physical activity even if you are staying at home.

What protective measures should people living with type 1 diabetes take?

- Firstly, look after your health and diabetes.
- Follow the instructions of MoPH by practicing social distancing, staying at home, avoiding crowds, parks and refraining from touching one another or surfaces;
- Always use a face mask and protective gloves when visiting public areas (i.e. grocery shopping or attending an appointment), at work and even at home when there is a family gathering;

- Personal hygiene is extremely important for people with diabetes at this time of the virus outbreak. Wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, clean your hands with an alcohol-based solution (60%) or sanitizer.
- People with diabetes are prone to skin dehydration, so a hand cream prescribed by your physician can be used at night to prevent dryness caused by consistent use of sanitizer;
- Prepare a list of your medications and the dosages in case of an emergency;
- Get adequate refills for medications, sufficient for at least two weeks and supplies for monitoring blood glucose at home;
- Have a supply to test your blood sugar and ketones;
- Have the contact information of your health care provider at hand so that you do not need to leave the house, if you become ill.

What should people living with type 1 diabetes do, if they get the virus?

- If you are showing symptoms such as coughing, fever or shortness of breath you may need assessment by a healthcare professional. Start self-quarantine, avoid any contact with others and call the national **COVID-19 hotline on 16000**;
- Practice the “Sick day rules” for people with diabetes:
 - o Do not stop diabetes medications. In fact, you are likely to need more insulin than usual when you are sick. Speak to your diabetes team through the **Diabetes Hotline 16099** -select option 4 (available seven days a week from 7am to 10pm);
 - o Check your glucose more often (at least every four hours);
 - o Check your urine or blood ketones. If you do not get enough insulin, your body will produce ketones which can make you sick;
 - o Eat frequent small meals;
 - o Delay any dieting;
 - o Drink more water;
 - o If you live alone, get support from a family member or a friend;
 - o Rest and postpone physical activity.
- If you notice that your blood sugar readings are getting high (more than 300 mg/dl after two consecutive tests during a period of two to eight hours), do not panic, that’s a normal body response for the infection and that’s why you may need more treatment - contact the **Diabetes Hotline 16099**.
- Mouth gargle with warm water and salt;
- Monitor temperature, and when needed use acetaminophen (paracetamol/ Panadol). Avoid anti-inflammatory drugs (ibuprofen/ Advil);
- Always follow your healthcare professional team recommendations.

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