

DIABETIC KETOACIDOSIS

Diabetic ketoacidosis or DKA is a true emergency and life threatening. It usually occurs either as the first presentation of Type 1 diabetes or in a patient with Type 1 or Type 2 diabetes under stress (illness, surgery, injury, failure to take medications). Diabetic ketoacidosis develops when there is insufficient insulin.

Warning Signs Of Diabetic Ketoacidosis

Fruity smell in breath

Passing large amounts of urine

Feeling very thirsty

Feeling sick

Abdominal (stomach) pain

Tiredness

Shortness of breath

An increase in blood sugar and/or urine ketone levels

What should be done?

Check blood sugar immediately

Give plenty of water

Check urine for ketones (with ketone testing strips)

Check with physician for dose of insulin

Take to hospital immediately (call ambulance or alternate transport)

Do not stop giving medicines because of sickness. It should be based on blood sugar levels.

What to expect in the hospital

- Intravenous fluids
- Admission to Intensive care unit
- Intravenous insulin
- Correction of Potassium and other electrolytes
- Tests to look for infection, electrolytes, acid base balance
- May be given oxygen
- Will be transferred to medical floor from ICU after condition stabilizes

Helpful tips during times of illness

- Please check blood sugars more frequently.
- Always give plenty of fluids (to keep hydrated, blood sugars will rise tremendously when there is dehydration).
- If the patient is vomiting or cannot eat, keep checking sugars and give insulin or medications based on blood sugars (as recommended by doctor's office).
- Respiratory infection: Give sugar

- free cough syrup for cough.
- Urinary infection: People with diabetes are more prone to urinary tract infections. Any urinary symptom needs evaluation and attention.
- Gastrointestinal (GI) infections: People with long history of diabetes may have constipation, diarrhea or vomiting due to gastroparesis. There may be involvement of the nervous system due to diabetes. It

- may not be an infection.
- Hypoglycemia or very high blood sugars can lead to dizziness; confusion; and loss of balance which in turn can lead to falls, injuries and accidents.

HYPOGLYCEMIA

Low blood sugar is called hypoglycemia [hypo= low, glycemia= blood sugar]
People with diabetes can develop hypoglycemia due to many reasons.

Symptoms of hypoglycemia

Some people may feel sweaty and shaky while others may feel some confusion or may even faint.



Precautions

If the patient is driving or operating any machinery please STOP and try to bring the blood sugar level up. If you repeat the blood sugar after 10 minutes and it is still low, give another 15 gms of carbohydrate and give the next meal or a snack which ever is feasible. Also seek medical help as early as possible especially if the symptoms of hypoglycemia keep recurring or are severe.

What causes hypoglycemia?

- ◆ Food
 - Skipping meals
 - Eating less than usual
 - Eating later than your regular/usual meal time
- ◆ Medication error
 - Sudden increase in the dosage of diabetes medications
 - Taking too many diabetes medications
 - Certain other medications
- ◆ More physical activity than usual
- ◆ Others
 - Sickness like vomiting and diarrhoea
 - Poor kidney or liver function
 - Certain hormonal deficiencies
 - Alcohol

Managing hypoglycemia

The best way is to quickly check with the glucometer. If the blood sugar is below 70 mgdl it is called hypoglycemia. Sometimes the meter may say "too low"

Immediate action:

If the patient is conscious and able to swallow, please give 15gms of carbohydrate. If the patient is unconscious or unable to swallow, please call physician and make arrangement to go to hospital.



1 tablespoon full of honey or sugar



5-6 pieces of hard candy



1 cup of milk



Glucose drink or tablets



2-3 biscuits with jam



½ cup orange juice or a fruit juice or regular soft drink (not diet)

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WOMEN'S HEALTH MATTERS