

Diabetes and Flu

Diabetes

is a disease where the body does not make or use insulin appropriately.

Flu

Influenza (flu) is a contagious respiratory illness caused by influenza viruses.



CDC/ Judy Schmidt

10.7%

of Indiana adults have diabetes.

7th

Diabetes is the 7th leading cause of death in Indiana.

Diabetes and the flu:

- If you get sick with the flu, talk to your doctor about how to take care of your diabetes. Take antivirals if your doctor gives them to you.
- Even if you take care of yourself, if you have diabetes (type 1 or type 2), you are at high risk of serious flu complications, like pneumonia.
- If you get sick with the flu, people with diabetes can develop high blood sugars.
- Being sick with the flu can prevent people with diabetes from getting proper nutrition.

Things you can do reduce your risk of flu:

- Cover your mouth when you cough or sneeze.
- Wash your hands regularly, especially after you cough or sneeze.
- Try not to touch your eyes, mouth or nose.
- Try to avoid being around sick people.
- Have enough of your medications to last a week, in case you have to stay home.
- Get an annual flu shot. Ask close friends and family to get one too.

Sick day rules

If you have diabetes and are sick with flu-like symptoms, follow these steps:

- Continue to take your diabetes pills or insulin. Don't stop even if you can't eat.
- Test your blood sugar levels every four (4) hours. Write down your results and share them with your doctor.
- When you have the flu, you can become dehydrated. Try to drink lots of clear fluids to prevent this from happening.
- Weigh yourself every day. Losing weight without trying is a sign of high blood sugars.
- Check your temperature every morning and evening. A fever may be a sign of infection.

Go to the doctor or emergency room if:

- You feel too sick to eat normally and are unable to keep down food for more than six (6) hours.
- You have severe diarrhea.
- You lose 5 pounds or more.
- Your temperature is over 101 degrees F.
- Your blood glucose is lower than 60 mg/dL or remains over 250 mg/dL on two (2) checks.
- You have moderate or large amounts of ketones in your urine.
- You have trouble breathing.
- You feel sleepy or can't think clearly.

References:

1. Stay Well in Flu Season. (2014). Retrieved March 30, 2016, from <http://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/managing/flu/index.html>
2. Indiana State Department of Health. (2014). *Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System*.
3. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. About Prediabetes & Type 2 Diabetes. (2016). Retrieved June 29, 2016, from <https://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/prevention/prediabetes-type2/index.html>
4. Indiana State Department of Health. Vital Records, 2014.
5. Schmidt, J. (2006). A senior woman receiving a vaccination shot from her doctor [Photograph]. Public Health Image Library, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Atlanta.

Take action

- See your doctor once a year for check-ups—more often if you have a chronic disease like hypertension.
- Maintain a healthy blood pressure and cholesterol level. If you've been told that you have high blood pressure or cholesterol, ask your doctor about the [DASH diet](#).
- At mealtime, make half your plate fruits and veggies.
- Take a walk after lunch and dinner. Just 15 minutes can make a difference.
- Don't smoke or chew tobacco. If you do, talk to your doctor about the benefits of quitting.
- Get at least eight (8) hours of sleep a night.
- If your health changes, or you're not feeling well, talk to your doctor.
- Talk to your doctor or a dietitian about lifestyle changes that could help improve your health.
- Go to www.choosemyplate.gov to find recipe ideas, online tools and resources to help you eat healthier and move more

Chronic disease resources

- Diabetes Self-Management Education and Support. Learn to live with diabetes. Find classes through the [Indiana Diabetes Education and Support Program Directory](#).
- [Diabetes Prevention Program \(DPP\)](#) is a lifestyle change program that helps to delay and/or prevent type 2 diabetes for individuals who are at risk.
- [Indiana's Community Health Centers](#) provide local primary health care services from a community perspective.
- [Indiana Perinatal Network](#) is a group of providers that seeks to improve the health of all mothers and babies.
- For problems with depression, addiction, or other mental health services: [Community Mental Health Services Locator](#).
- [WISEWOMAN](#): (Well-Integrated Screening and Evaluation for Women Across the Nation Program) provides cardiovascular screening for women ages 40-64 who are participants in the Indiana Breast and Cervical Cancer Program (IN-BCCP).
- [Indiana Tobacco Quitline](#) is a free phone service to help Indiana smokers quit. For support call: 800-Quit-Now (800-784-8669).
- [Indiana Women, Infants and Children \(WIC\)](#) is a program helping mothers and babies improve access to nutritious food and promoting healthier lifestyle.