

## COVID-19 outbreak and guidance for people with diabetes

*International Diabetes Federation Guidelines*

At the end of 2019, a novel coronavirus (a specific virus that causes human and animal disease) was identified as the cause of pneumonia cases in Wuhan, a city in the Hubei Province of China. It rapidly spread thereafter, resulting in an epidemic throughout China, with quick spread globally, affecting now nearly every continent. Understanding of this novel coronavirus is still evolving. The virus can spread from infected animals (most likely started in China from wild animal consumption), but human-to-human transmission is possible also. It spreads like any other respiratory disease, through contaminated air-droplets that come out of the mouth of infected persons when talking, coughing or sneezing. **The virus can survive in the environment from a few hours to a few days (depending on the surfaces and the environmental conditions) and touching affected surfaces and then the mouth or nose is thought to be the way of transmission. The virus is killed in the environment with alcohol-based solutions.**

### *What should people with diabetes do if they get sick with the virus?*

It is better that people with **diabetes plan ahead of time about what to do before they get sick**. Have the telephone numbers of your health care provider. Ensure you have an **adequate stock of medications and consumables for monitoring blood glucose** at home, so that you do not need to go out in case of illness or should the situation impact e.g. local pharmacy opening times.

If you get sick with the virus, you may see your glycaemic control deteriorate during the illness. You should practice the “Sick day rules” as recommended:

#### SICK DAY RULES FOR PEOPLE WITH DIABETES

- KEEP HYDRATED
- MONITOR YOUR BLOOD GLUCOSE REGULARLY
- MONITOR YOUR TEMPERATURE IF YOU FEEL LIKE YOU HAVE A FEVER
- IF YOU HAVE TYPE 1 DIABETES, YOU SHOULD MONITOR YOUR KETONE LEVELS
- FOLLOW YOUR HEALTHCARE TEAM RECOMMENDATIONS

### *How could the disease be avoided?*

**Simple, sensible measures** should be taken in every-day life in order to avoid the disease:

- **Frequently wash hands with soap and water or use an alcohol-based solution**, especially before eating and after being in public. **Do not use an alcohol based solution before taking your blood glucose levels as this can give you an inaccurate high reading.**
- **Don't share food, tools, glasses and towels.**
- **Avoid close contact with those who are sick.** If someone is visibly ill, coughing or sneezing, keep away.
- **If you get sick with respiratory symptoms, stay at home and notify others and your health care provider of the illness. HSE Helpline 1850241850**
- **When sneezing or coughing, cover the nose and mouth** with a tissue or with the crook of the elbow. **Throw the tissue in the bin.**
- **The World Health Organization recommends that for people without respiratory symptoms, wearing a medical mask in the community is not required, even if COVID-19 is prevalent in the area;** wearing a mask does not decrease the importance of other general measures to prevent infection, and it may result in unnecessary cost and supply problems.