

## CORONAVIRUS + DIABETES

[Coronavirusdiabetes.org](https://Coronavirusdiabetes.org)

### Behavior Change Guidelines for Organization and Community Leaders

*Updated August 27, 2020*

As COVID-19 has progressed, we have learned that, contrary to initial reports, diabetes itself does not seem to increase the risk of being infected by the novel coronavirus. Older age and other correlating factors like high blood pressure, underlying heart or lung conditions, being overweight, or having consistently elevated blood glucose levels seem to have a greater impact on risk. However, living with diabetes does seem to be correlated with more intense symptoms if COVID-19 is contracted.

Not everyone with diabetes faces the same personal risk, but we're only powerful against coronavirus when we work together. Together, we have the power to shape what happens next. Every action to curb the spread of the virus represents countless infections prevented. Together, we can lead the way in stopping the spread of COVID-19. The lives of the most vulnerable among us are on the line.

**Get involved:** Join us in spreading the word about the importance of these actions to the community you serve. E-mail [coronavirus@beyondtype1.org](mailto:coronavirus@beyondtype1.org) and we'll add your organization to the growing list of sharing partners around the world. Work with us to translate, customize, and share resources to protect the diabetes community.

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### BEHAVIOR CHANGE GOALS

The following set of behavior change goals and recommendations for people with diabetes during the COVID-19 outbreak were created by the [JDRF - Beyond Type 1 Alliance](#) and endorsed by [the American Diabetes Association](#), [Harvard Medical School](#), and the [International Society for Pediatric and Adolescent Diabetes](#) (ISPAD).

***Not everyone is able to take every precaution - but every precaution taken makes a difference.***

**Together as a community, we will work to:**

- 1. Increase our baseline health to lower the risk of severe infection by:**
  - a. Managing our diabetes as well as we possibly can**
  - b. Maximizing our baseline physical and mental health**
  - c. Getting treated quickly if we do get sick**
- 2. Continue to reduce or eliminate our exposure to the novel coronavirus by:**
  - a. Establishing and maintaining strict hygiene**
  - b. Minimizing our physical interaction with others**
  - c. Taking extra precautions if we do have to go out**
  - d. Changing how we work and go to school to make it safer**

**BEHAVIOR CHANGE RECOMMENDATIONS**

<b>Shared Goal</b>	<b>Individual Behaviors</b>
<p>Elevated average blood sugar levels in individuals with diabetes is a risk factor for more severe COVID-19 outcomes - <i>set yourself up for success with diabetes management.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Test blood sugar levels more often; your body may be reacting differently under these new circumstances. Maintain a routine of physical movement and blood sugar friendly eating.</li> <li>● Contact your doctor or health professionals by phone/telehealth if possible for personal diabetes management advice, especially if your blood glucose numbers are consistently out of range.</li> <li>● Familiarize yourself with how to check for ketones. If you have adequate supplies, check for ketones regularly regardless of blood sugar levels.</li> <li>● Secure a sufficient amount of your standard management supplies as well as supplies to check ketones and treat severe hypoglycemia (glucagon).</li> <li>● Lean on your community for help – none of these behaviors are easy, and we all need support. Look into diabetes online communities.</li> </ul>
<p>Being overweight/obese and smoking are risk factors for more severe COVID-19 outcomes, in addition to elevated blood glucose levels - <i>maximize baseline physical and mental health to improve physical immunity.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● If you smoke or vape, stop now.</li> <li>● If overweight, work toward a healthier weight.</li> <li>● Prepare meals at home using whole foods and stay hydrated.</li> <li>● Be sure to exercise, in your home or in an outdoor area where you can easily maintain distance from others.</li> <li>● Get a sufficient amount of quality sleep - most adults need 7+ hours per night, children need more (at least 9).</li> <li>● Reach out to others to stay in touch virtually, especially those who may need help.</li> <li>● Check in with your mental health, including substance use and other potentially harmful habits. If you are struggling with mental health, seek online help.</li> </ul>
<p>Many are returning to work and school - <i>make environments as safe as possible.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Work from home as much as you can. Look into modifications in work procedures to keep 2 meters / 6 feet distance from others. Adjust your schedule to avoid high-traffic times.</li> <li>● If you manage a work or school environment, ensure precautions are being set up for vulnerable individuals. Advocate for flexible work options for high-risk individuals.</li> </ul>

<p>Early detection of COVID-19 or other health issues can be life saving - <i>if you get sick, get treated quickly.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Measure temperature daily with a thermometer and take heart rate with a watch. Track any changes.</li> <li>● Never stop taking insulin or other medications, even when you become sick. Discuss insulin, metformin, or other medication dosage changes with a doctor.</li> <li>● Make sure you have a diabetes-specific sick day management plan ready, just in case.</li> <li>● Know the <a href="#">warning signs of diabetic ketoacidosis (DKA)</a> and seek immediate medical attention for symptoms including fruity smelling breath, vomiting, weight loss, dehydration, confusion, and hyperventilation.</li> </ul>
<p>Basic precautions save lives - <i>continue strict personal hygiene habits.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Wash hands every time you come into contact with an out-of-home item or place.</li> <li>● Wear a cloth mask or face covering any time you're within 2 meters/6 feet of individuals outside your home.</li> <li>● Avoid prolonged exposure to aerosolized particles - e.g. indoor spaces with low ventilation, especially featuring loud conversation or singing</li> <li>● Regularly disinfect high-touch surfaces in your home, cough or sneeze into your elbow or a tissue, and avoid touching your face.</li> </ul>
<p>Social distancing works - <i>continue to minimize physical interaction with others.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Minimize contact with individuals outside your household. Maintain a distance of at least 2 meters / 6 ft from others.</li> <li>● Minimize trips outside of your home - shop weekly if your budget allows, get groceries delivered if you can, and seek routine medical care from home, utilizing telehealth and mail-order pharmacy options.</li> <li>● Adjust schedule to avoid busy times in public places. Take advantage of dedicated shopping times for vulnerable individuals if available.</li> </ul>