

Blood sugar monitoring

- If you are diabetic and you are not already testing your sugars the Diabetic Education Team can supply you with a blood sugar meter upon referral.
- You will need to monitor your blood sugars before meals and at bedtime for the first 2 weeks of starting on steroids.
- Your health care team will direct you to what your specific blood sugar goals are.

Keep a record of your sugars

Medications may be adjusted or added to your routine if sugars are:

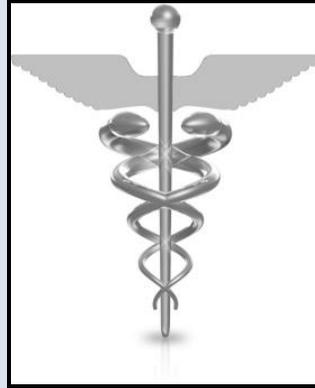
- Less than 4 mmol/l more than twice per week.
- Greater than 11.2 mmol/l on three or more occasions in one week.

Keeping a record will assist you to know when to contact your clinic nurse or the diabetes educator.

Things to remember:

Never stop taking your steroid medication without consulting your cancer care Physician.

If you have any concerns do not hesitate to ask your healthcare team.



Contact Information:

Your Healthcare Team at the Cancer Centre

Phone: 519-749-4380

Monday-Friday 8:30 am - 4 pm

Adult Diabetes Education Centre

40 Green St. Kitchener, ON

Kaufman building 5th floor.

Monday-Friday 8 am – 4 pm

Phone: 519-749-4300 ext. 2622

Fax: 519-749-4317

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Steroid Therapy

What should I know?



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How do steroids affect me?

Cancer treatments often require supportive medications called steroids. Common names of these medications are:

- Dexamethasone (Decadron)
- Prednisone
- Cortisone

Steroids may increase the level of sugar in your blood. Controlling blood sugar is very important to your healing and wellness.

Steroids also have side effects that are not related to increase blood sugars that can be a nuisance. These include increased hunger, weight gain, swelling, sleep concerns and mood swings. These should be discussed with your healthcare team at your next visit.

If you are not diabetic but your blood sugar becomes high you may be diagnosed with steroid induced diabetes. Your health care team can refer you to the Diabetic Education Centre. They will teach you the skills you will need to monitor your blood sugar level at home and help you to remain well during your therapy.

If you have type 1 or type 2 diabetes and are taking steroids, you may find it harder to keep your blood sugar levels in your recommended range. You will have to notify your family doctor or endocrinologist of your cancer treatment plan so they can adjust your medications and blood sugar monitoring.

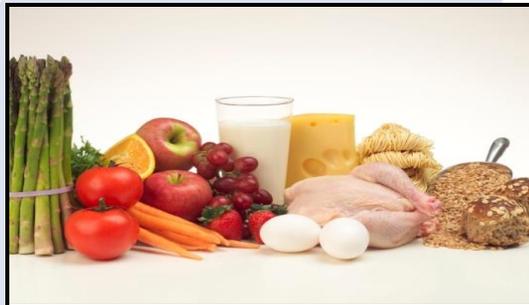
What are the symptoms of high blood sugar?

- Blurred vision
- Dry mouth and increased thirst
- Stomach pains or cramps
- Increased urination
- Feeling tired or weak

If you are experiencing any of these symptoms it is very important to call your health care team at the cancer centre as soon as possible.

How can I take care of myself?

- Make healthy food choices.
- Attend diabetes education programs.
- Take medicine exactly as directed by your healthcare team.
- Participate in physical activity daily i.e. walking or yoga 30 minutes per day 5 times a week if able.
- Ask your healthcare team about the Well-Fit program at University of Waterloo.



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Make healthy food choices

Carbohydrates are important for providing the body with the energy it needs for physical activity and proper organ function. Carbohydrates are found in:

- Grains and starches (bread, cereal, rice, corn, potatoes)
- Fruits and some vegetables
- Legumes (kidney beans, chick peas or lentils)
- Milk and milk products (soymilk, rice milk)
- Honey

To stay healthy:

- Eat a variety of fruits and vegetables, whole grains and dairy every day
- Eat at regular times
- Eat 3 meals a day and healthy snacks in between meals
- Limit sugars, regular pop or juices, desserts, candies, jam and honey
- If thirsty drink water

You can attend Wellness Workshops on healthy eating and exercise.

Upon referral, a dietitian can develop a proper meal plan with you.

Ask your health care team for more information.