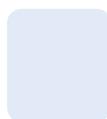


Surgery and hospital stays

When you have diabetes, having surgery or a medical procedure requires you to do some planning and take more care than usual.

You will probably need to fast – that is, have nothing to eat or drink beforehand – and you may need an anaesthetic. Also, your blood glucose levels may increase if you feel stress, anxiety or pain. If you need to stay in hospital, there may also be changes to your medications, activity levels and eating patterns, which can affect your blood glucose levels.

Looking after your diabetes before, during and following a procedure/surgery can help prevent complications, such as infections and delayed wound healing.



Have a diabetes management review beforehand

Before you have any surgery or procedures that require fasting, make sure you visit your general practitioner (GP), endocrinologist or diabetes educator. Ask them to review your current diabetes management and discuss how the procedure/surgery may affect this.

Important questions to ask your diabetes health professionals:

- » Discuss how to best look after your diabetes before and after the procedure/surgery.
- » If you are taking insulin or diabetes medication (tablets or other injectable medications), check what adjustments you might need to make before, during or after the procedure/surgery, especially if you need to fast.
- » Ask if your medications need to be changed temporarily, especially if you are taking metformin (brand names Diabex, Diaformin, Glucophage, Metex, Formet) or SGLT2 inhibitors (brand names Forxiga, Jardiance).
- » Discuss your sick day management plan and ask about treatment for low blood glucose levels (hypoglycaemia or a hypo) if you are fasting or on fluids before your procedure/surgery.

Helpline 1300 136 588

ndss.com.au

Talk to your surgeon/medical team

Ask your GP for a list of any special instructions you might need to look after your diabetes before the procedure/surgery. Tell everyone involved, such as the nurses, anaesthetist and surgeons about:

- » the fact that you have diabetes, and how it is managed
- » any other medical conditions you have
- » any other medications you are taking (including vitamins, herbal medicines and over-the-counter preparations).

Ask to be first or high on the list for procedures/surgery so your diabetes routine is disrupted as little as possible. Provide the hospital staff with the contact details of your endocrinologist, GP and diabetes educator.

If you need an interpreter, make arrangements in advance. An interpreter service is available at no cost in public hospitals.

Check your blood glucose levels regularly

Talk to your doctor about whether you need to check your blood glucose levels more often before your procedure/surgery. If so, keep a record of your blood glucose levels for at least two weeks beforehand and have these reviewed by your diabetes health professionals so you can discuss what your target levels should be. Looking after your diabetes will help the healing process and reduce the risk of infection.

Discuss with your diabetes health professionals how to best look after your diabetes when having surgery or a procedure.

The day before and day of your procedure

- » If your doctor has asked you to self-monitor your blood glucose levels, aim to have them in the target range. Check your blood glucose levels more often as recommended by your health professionals. This is particularly important if your procedure requires you to fast.
- » Treat any hypos you have before your procedure/surgery even if you are fasting. Tell the medical staff about your hypo and how it was treated. They will decide whether your procedure can go ahead as planned.
- » Take all medication, hypo treatment and blood glucose monitoring equipment with you.
- » Take a list showing how much and how often you take all of your medications, including non-prescription medications or preparations.

After your procedure/surgery

- » Check with the health professional who performed your procedure/surgery about any driving restrictions. You may need a relative or friend to drive you home.
- » You may be asked to take your medication with a light meal before you go home. Follow your doctor's advice about the dose you need to take.
- » Once you are discharged, review your medications and insulin with your GP or endocrinologist, especially as your condition improves and your blood glucose levels settle.
- » Resume your diabetes medications or insulin as instructed by your GP or endocrinologist. You may be advised not to take metformin – or to take a lower dose – for a couple of days.

- » Your doctor may ask you to check your blood glucose levels more frequently after your procedure/surgery. There is a higher risk of a hypo following fasting, and a risk of high blood glucose levels due to anxiety, stress or pain.
- » If you are sick or unwell or have any side effects from the procedure/surgery, seek advice from the hospital or day surgery. Follow your sick day management plan and talk to your doctor or diabetes educator.

Always contact your endocrinologist, GP or diabetes educator if you are not sure what to do with your medications or insulin, or if you are concerned about managing your diabetes.



Contact your doctor or diabetes health professional for advice if you:

- need to fast before your procedure/surgery
- have ketones in your blood or urine before or after the procedure/surgery

Important information if you use insulin



Ask your diabetes specialist and surgeon about:

- » adjustments to your insulin doses
- » target blood glucose levels and appropriate blood/urine ketone checks
- » hospital admission and intravenous insulin and fluids/glucose, if necessary.



If you use an insulin pump:

- » ask if it needs to be detached if you are having certain investigations, such as medical imaging
- » check whether there are any special instructions you will need to follow before your procedure/surgery
- » ask if you can continue to use your pump during the procedure and operate it yourself (if you are having a local anaesthetic)
- » if you can't use your pump during the procedure/surgery, insulin may be given by injection or insulin infusion, and intravenous fluids/glucose may be started before the procedure/surgery
- » change your line at least 24 hours before coming into hospital.

The NDSS and you

The NDSS provides a range of services to help you manage your diabetes. These include our Infoline and website for advice on diabetes management, NDSS products and a range of support programs to help you learn more about managing your diabetes.

Published June 2016