Medications That May Affect Blood Glucose Levels

Non-Prescription Medications

- Many over the counter (OTC) products can affect a person’s blood sugar due to:
  - Sugar content
  - Effect of the drug itself

- Decongestants (e.g. Sudafed®, Sinutab®, Dimetapp®, Neocitran®):
  - May increase blood sugar or blood pressure
  - Suggest using nasal sprays rather than tablets/capsules, (e.g. Otrivin®, Dristan®)

- Cough suppressants / expectorants (e.g. Robitussin®, Buckleys®):
  - May contain sugar

- Pain relievers:
  - Aspirin®, Ibuprofen (e.g. Motrin®)
    - May increase blood pressure
    - Avoid if kidney problems
  - Tylenol®
    - No effect on blood sugar
    - Can be used short term

Herbal Medications

- Not enough is known to recommend or avoid these products. Suggestions if you do take them:
  - Check your blood sugar more often.
  - Buy a reputable brand.
  - Include these in your medication list and tell your health care professional that you are taking them.
  - Ask your pharmacist if the herbal medication has an effect on your blood sugars and if it interacts with any of your medications.

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Our hospital is a scent-safe environment.
Please refrain from wearing scented products.
Prescription drugs that *may affect* blood sugar levels

Some of the medication your physician may prescribe can have an effect on your blood sugar. If you take this medication regularly it will be balanced by your diabetes medication or diet and activity.

*Never* stop any of your medication without discussing it with your health care provider.

- **Drugs that MAY INCREASE blood sugar levels:**
  - Thiazide Diuretics (e.g. Hydrochlorothiazide)
  - Glucocorticoids (e.g. Prednisone)
  - Lithium and atypical antipsychotics

- **Drugs that MAY DECREASE blood sugar levels:**
  - ASA (aspirin®) only in high doses
    (High dose = 3g per day for three to five days)

- **Drugs that MAY MASK the signs and symptoms of Hypoglycemia (low blood sugar)**
  - Beta-blockers (e.g. metoprolol, atenolol, propanolol, sotalol)

**Other**

Alcohol can mask the symptoms of hypoglycemia or seriously lower your blood sugar. Always drink in moderation and never on an empty stomach. The Canadian Diabetes Association recommends **no more than two drinks per day** and **no more than ten drinks per week for women** and **no more than three drinks per day** and **no more than fifteen drinks per week for men**.

When in doubt, ask your pharmacist any questions related to medications.