



Preventa Clinic

Wellness for everyone

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Sick-day Regimen: Quick caregiver handout

Why this matters?

Illness, fever, injury or some vaccinations can trigger a catabolic state that breaks down body protein and releases amino acids. In children with certain metabolic disorders, these amino acids can accumulate and cause vomiting, excessive sleepiness, coordination problems, altered mental status, seizures, and life-threatening complications. Early dietary and medical steps reduce the risk of rapid deterioration and hospital admission.

What a sick-day regime is

Goal: prevent catabolism, maintain energy and hydration, and limit intake of problematic natural protein while ensuring adequate calories. **Core elements:**

- **Provide carbohydrate-rich, protein-free fluids/foods** (e.g., glucose polymer / maltodextrin solutions) to supply energy and stop endogenous protein breakdown.
- **Adjust or temporarily stop natural protein** only as directed by your metabolic team; prescribed amino-acid formulas may be continued or increased depending on the disorder.
- **Close monitoring** of consciousness, feeding tolerance, temperature and warning signs so hospital escalation happens promptly if needed.

Practical at-home steps (immediate actions)

- **Give ample fluids** to avoid dehydration.
- **Start age-appropriate carbohydrate solutions;** offer small, frequent sips if nauseated. Add electrolytes as per rehydration guidance.
- **Continue or adjust prescribed amino-acid formula only under guidance;** do not make unilateral changes.



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- **Stop natural protein immediately** if vomiting, high temperature, or as directed for your specific disorder.
- **Reassess hourly** for feeding tolerance and warning signs; if no improvement within ~2 hours after starting home treatment, seek medical advice.

Keep written notes of times, volumes, and any changes you make.

Watch for warning signs — act immediately if any occur

- Loss of appetite, refusal of feeds, poor fluid intake.
- Recurrent vomiting or diarrhea, high fever, prolonged fasting.
- Drowsiness, marked lethargy, changes in behaviour or consciousness.
- Seizures, abnormal body movements, or rapid weight loss (>10%). If any of these appear, contact your metabolic physician or go to hospital without delay.

Transition and monitoring guidance

- **Continue the sick-day regimen for at least 3–4 days** after symptoms have fully improved following illness, surgery, or vaccination.
- **Return gradually** to the usual well-day regimen over several days as the child shows steady improvement.
- **Watch closely** during the transition for relapse: fever, increased tiredness, poor feeding, breathing changes, decreased urine output, or new/worsening symptoms.
- **If the child stops improving or worrying signs appear**, contact your healthcare provider promptly.
- **Record** the date symptoms resolved and when you begin each step of the return-to-well routine to share with the clinician if needed.

Hospital admission checklist for unwell feeds

- **Bring adequate supplies** of every feeding product your child uses (formula, specialized feeds, supplements, enteral equipment).
- **Keep original packaging and labels** so the treating team can confirm ingredients, concentrations and preparation instructions.
- **Pack extras** for at least 48-72 hours beyond expected stay.
- **Include written notes** with usual feeding schedule, volumes, fortification details, and known allergies/intolerances.
- **Label everything** with your child's name and date of birth.

Legal and medical disclaimer

Educational purpose only: This handout is for general information and does not constitute medical advice. It is not a substitute for assessment, diagnosis, or treatment by a qualified healthcare professional. When in doubt, follow the advice of your treating clinician or seek urgent medical attention.



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