

# DIABETIC KETOACIDOSIS – INITIAL MANAGEMENT GUIDELINE

Document Detail	
Document Type	Regional Guideline
Document Name	DKA – Initial management Guide
Document Locations	
First Introduced	2017
Version Number	v3.3
Effective Date	September 2024
Review schedule	2 years
Review Date	September 2026
Owner	NECTAR
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Related Documents	BSPED Integrated Care Pathway for Management of CYP with DKA
Keywords	DKA, diabetes, shock,
<p><i>This clinical guideline was produced by NECTAR hosted by Newcastle Upon Tyne Hospital Trust. To be used by clinicians in the emergency care of acutely/critically ill children. This guideline represents the views of NECTAR and was produced after careful consideration of available evidence in conjunction with clinical expertise and experience. The guideline does not override the individual responsibility of healthcare professionals to make decisions appropriate to the circumstances of the individual patient.</i></p>	

# DIABETIC KETOACIDOSIS – INITIAL MANAGEMENT GUIDELINE

**DIAGNOSIS OF DKA** BLOOD GLUCOSE(BG) > 11\*- (glucose *may* be normal in a known diabetic) + ACIDOSIS - pH <7.3 or HCO<sub>3</sub><sup>-</sup> <15mmol/l + KETONAEMIA – Bld Ketones> 3mmol/l  
\*If Hyperglycaemic (>35mmol/L) in the absence of significant ketosis or acidosis – Consider [Hyperosmolar Hyperglycaemic State](#)  
Follow BSPED Integrated Care Pathway (ICP) in conjunction with the online calculator at [www.dka-calculator.co.uk](http://www.dka-calculator.co.uk)

**DIAGNOSIS OF SHOCK** – APLS definition – Tachycardia, prolonged CRT, poor peripheral pulses, hypotension (late sign)  
**Beware** – acidosis due to DKA can alter CRT and cause poor peripheral perfusion

## INITIAL ASSESSMENT

### AIRWAY

Assess patency – if not self-maintaining, or AVPU score = 'V' or less

- Insert OPA / NPA if required
- Seek urgent anaesthetic assistance
- Insert an NG tube on free drainage
- CONTACT NECTAR**

### ASPIRATION CAN BE FATAL IN DKA

### BREATHING

- Give high flow O<sub>2</sub> to maintain normal SpO<sub>2</sub>
- Continuously monitor RR and SpO<sub>2</sub>
- If requiring assistance with ventilation seek urgent anaesthetic help & [CONTACT NECTAR](#)

### CIRCULATION

- Record BP hourly, start continuous ECG monitoring (peaked T waves = hyperkalemia)
- Obtain IV/IO access and send bloods for FBC, U&E, CRP Glucose, Blood Gas and Ketones

### INADEQUATE RESUSCITATION CAN BE FATAL

### DISABILITY

- Measure GCS / AVPU **1 hourly OR every 30 minutes** in severe DKA or patients under 2yrs of age.
- Use PEWS or equivalent local chart alongside the Serial Data Sheet in the Integrated Care Pathway
- Assess for evidence of cerebral oedema – see box

## FLUID DEFICIT AND MAINTENANCE

If no shock give 10ml/kg over 30min (*subtract from deficit*)

If signs of **shock/thready pulse/hypotension**

- Give 10mls/kg 0.9% saline/Hartmann's/Plasmalyte ASAP – reassess & repeat involving the Consultant Paediatrician.
- If persistent shock after 20ml/kg consider severe sepsis and carefully consider further fluid boluses and/or inotropes - involve Diabetes Consultant/[NECTAR](#) for further advice.

### CALCULATE FLUID DEFICIT

pH <7.3/ HCO<sub>3</sub><sup>-</sup><15mmol/L = Mild DKA (5% dehydration)  
pH <7.2/ HCO<sub>3</sub><sup>-</sup><10mmol/L = Mod DKA (5% dehydration)  
pH <7.1/ HCO<sub>3</sub><sup>-</sup><5mmol/L = Severe DKA (10% dehydration)

### CALCULATE MAINTENANCE REQUIREMENTS

- Weigh patient or use recent accurate weight
    - 100 ml/kg/day for the first 10 kg BW
    - 50 ml/kg/day for the second 10 kg BW
    - 20ml/kg for each additional kilogram above 20 kg
    - **Max 75 kg body weight/97<sup>th</sup> centile for age (choose lower)**
- Hourly =  $\frac{\text{Deficit \%} \times \text{Weight (kg)} \times 10}{48 \text{ hours}}$  + Maintenance requirement (ml/hr)

**N.B. Fluid boluses should not be subtracted from total fluid allowance for shocked patients**

- 0.9% saline/Hartmann's/Plasmalyte for fluid bolus
- All fluids except bolus to contain 40mmol/L KCl unless initial K >5.5
- Change to 0.9% saline + 5% Glucose once BG <14mmol/L

\*If Neonatal DKA [CONTACT NECTAR](#) (special circumstance)

## INSULIN

- Commence an IV Insulin infusion **1-2hrs after** starting IV fluid therapy due to expected fall in blood glucose
- Start soluble insulin infusion at 0.05-0.1units/kg/hr

**Expect K<sup>+</sup> levels to fall with insulin infusion**

- Monitor 1-2hrly Glu/Ketones and Lab U&E minimum 4hrly
- If K<sup>+</sup> < 3.0mmol – **CONTACT NECTAR**

### HYPOKALAEMIA CAN BE FATAL IN DKA

## CEREBRAL OEDEMA

Assess for headache, irritability, ↓GCS, ↓HR, ↑BP, unequal/dilated pupils, posturing or oculomotor palsies

- Calculate corrected Na<sup>+</sup>=Na<sup>+</sup>+{(Glucose mmol - 5.5)/3.5}

Lab Na<sup>+</sup> should rise with therapy by 0.5-1mmol/hr.  
**If Sodium not increasing and GCS falling treat as cerebral oedema.**  
**Do not give intravenous sodium bicarbonate**

### In suspected cerebral oedema

- Place in 30° head up position
- Give 2.5-5 mls/kg of 3% Saline or 2.5-5 ml/kg of 20% Mannitol over 15mins
- ½ maintenance & slow deficit over 72hrs
- Urgent anaesthetic help and [CONTACT NECTAR](#)
- Consider excluding other diagnoses with CT

### CEREBRAL OEDEMA CAN BE FATAL IN DKA

# APPENDIX 1

## SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS/ ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

### Significant deviation from usual DKA presentation

Most frequent referrals to NECTAR which can be potentially **life threatening**

Refractory circulatory shock

Hypo/Hyperkalemia

Cerebral oedema

#### Conference call checklist

- Ensure Paediatric Consultant input is available at patient bedside at referring hospital
- Ensure fluid calculations are accurate
- Ensure insulin dosing and timing of commencement are discussed
- Ensure adequate monitoring including fluid input/output
- Ensure IV access issues are discussed if appropriate
- Ensure Integrated Care pathway (BSPED) being followed alongside NECTAR guidance
- Ensure additional local Paediatric Diabetes expertise is used if available
- Ensure discussion about most appropriate care area for ongoing management based on clinical condition
- Involve PICU\_GNCH Consultant to discuss if admission to PICU is appropriate
  
- Ensure Consultant level discussion and local escalation plans are activated to ensure no admission delays due to capacity
- Ensure any safeguarding issues are documented/addressed
- Agree follow-up calls if appropriate

- **Second conference call at 6hrs if no improvement/earlier if patient deteriorating**