

COVID-19 facts every person with diabetes should know

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A Purdue College of Pharmacy resource has some tips for people with high risk conditions to make pharmacy trips safely – and keeping your social distance in the process – including an online listing of Indiana pharmacies that offer delivery, drive-thru and curbside pickup services. Credit: Unsplash/James Yarema

People with diabetes are being warned that they are at "high risk" during the COVID-19 pandemic, and a Purdue University expert can explain more about what that means.

Maybe the biggest surprise is that being at "high risk" does not mean people with [diabetes](#)—Type 1 or Type 2—are more likely to catch the virus than people without it, says Jasmine Gonzalvo, clinical professor of pharmacy practice and director of the Purdue Center for Health Equity and Innovation.

"What needs clarification is this population is at high risk for developing serious complications from the virus," Gonzalvo says. "People see the brief narrative around COVID that implies, 'high-risk, COVID, diabetes.'" It needs to be clear that if you have diabetes, you're at a higher risk for serious complications from the virus—not serious risk of catching it."

Gonzalvo is chair of the Certification Board for Diabetes Care and Education and the sole pharmacist and [diabetes care](#) and education specialist serving on the National Clinical Care Commission. She says that managing diabetes well will likely reduce the chances of developing serious complications once someone with diabetes catches the virus.

"If you're monitoring your blood sugars, eating well and taking your insulin or other medications as recommended, you can likely reduce your risk of dealing with [severe symptoms](#) or life-threatening complications," says Gonzalvo, who has provided clinical care to individuals with diabetes and other cardiovascular risk factors for 13 years at Eskenazi Health, Indianapolis.

Gonzalvo says another concern is insulin rationing. The cost of insulin is causing some people with diabetes to use less than they're prescribed, especially now, when many people are out of work. Using less insulin for long periods of time can cause hyperglycemia and can lead to serious complications for those who contract the coronavirus. Gonzalvo urges people who are struggling to afford their [insulin](#) to review their options at the American Diabetes Association's [Insulin Help](#) resource. For those seeking cost-saving coupons for other medications, including those for diabetes, Gonzalvo suggests [GoodRx](#). The American Diabetes Association is another resource for diabetes-related COVID questions, as well as the [Diabetes Disaster Response Coalition](#).

Provided by Purdue University

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