



‘What Happens If....?’

Everyday Problem Solving

PLEASE DISCUSS THESE OPTIONS WITH YOUR REGISTERED DIETITIAN BEFORE IMPLEMENTING THEM.

DIFFERENT CENTRES MAY USE DIFFERENT EMERGENCY STRATEGIES.

Over the years we have received many calls regarding a variety of problems so this education tool is dedicated to a ‘What Happens If’ scenario. Hopefully it will give you some suggestions to correct a problem if something goes wrong. Regardless how careful you are, there may be a situation where your child eats something not on his/her diet, but **DON'T PANIC.**

Here is a list of possible solutions to some problems. There is no guarantee that these will work but these are some of the things that have been tried by others over the years.

You may want to go through this list with your dietitian and decide which of the solutions would be best for you to implement. This information can also be given to schools, daycares, residential placements or respite centres for use by other caregivers as well.

When a child has eaten something not on his/her diet or if there is a situation where something has gone wrong and ketones have dropped, **ALWAYS** make sure you have your own emergency medications in the house which have been prescribed by your Neurologist. These may need to be used if there are any breakthrough seizures.



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➤ **What happens if my child is at school and spills part of his/her lunch?**

1. Perhaps a family member lives close by and can take another meal to the school.
2. Keep another 'emergency meal' in the school freezer such as an all in one keto muffin or quiche or a keto shake.
3. Phone the parents or caregivers and discuss the options available at the school. A meal may be able to be made using protein, fats and small amounts of vegetables.
4. If half or less than half of the meal is spilled, no alternative or additional meal is required.

➤ **What happens if my child picks up someone else's food and eats some?**

1. When possible, remove as much of the food from your child's mouth as you are able.
2. You could give some fat to try to balance out any carbs that have been eaten. You may give a small amount of fat such as oil, butter, coconut oil or mayonnaise.
3. You could give only part of the next meal or miss a snack if your child has snacks. Make a plan with your dietitian about missing part or all of a meal when reviewing this handout so you are prepared should you need to use this option.
4. Check your child's ketones before any action is taken as it may be that the ketones are on the rise. If not, miss a snack but not a meal so that the ketones will not become too high later in the day. Just be very accurate with the diet at all following meals.

➤ **What happens if I discover sometime later that my child ate some extra food?**

Use the same advice as for the previous problem.

In some instances there may be nothing you can do. Be certain that you have your emergency meds in the house and use as needed. Ensure the diet is very accurate for the next few days.



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➤ **What happens if my child refuses to eat?**

Ask yourself the following questions:

- a) Are you getting anxious and demonstrating this to your child about him/her eating all his/her food?
- b) Is this a behavioural problem?
- c) Is your child not eating because s/he sees you or the rest of the family eating different foods than s/he receives?
- d) Is your child not eating because s/he is not hungry and/or are the ketones too high?
If you have answered 'Yes' to any of the above questions try the following:

1. Allow for a reasonable length of time to be dedicated to a pleasant meal or snack time. Do not try to rush a meal or snack time.
2. If you are anxious, try not to show it. Put the food in front of your child and let him/her eat. If you are feeding your child, try a spoonful. If the child refuses the food, take it away. Leave a longer gap between trying spoonfuls of food or give the child something to distract him/her from the plate of food.
3. Empower the child to make some decisions. If possible let your child be apart of deciding what ketogenic menu they would like to have for their meal or snack. If your ketogenic menus allow for exchange lists then also permit your child to be apart of deciding what they can have.
4. You may need to take the meal away and when your child is hungry, offer the same meal or a ketoshake alternative.
5. Change the eating pattern and the meal times. Feed the child somewhere other than at the table such as having a picnic. Use distraction methods such as listening to music or reading a story while the child is eating.
6. If the child sees you or the rest of the family eating something different this can be a cause of stress for the child and the parents. Try to eat similar things as your child so everyone's meal looks the same. Family meals can easily be adapted to keto friendly meals.
7. If needed, feed your child before everyone else or have one member of the family eat with the child with a similar type of meal.



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8. Check your child's ketones. If they are very high, this may be preventing your child from wanting to eat. If this is the case, call your dietitian to discuss a plan.
9. If your child has been prescribed too many calories, s/he may not be hungry. If s/he is gaining too quickly, this may be a sign that s/he does not need as much as has been prescribed for him/her to eat.
10. Try menus that have less food items so that there is less challenge to feed all the Food. Examples: Keto shakes, soups, keto muffins.

➤ **What happens if my child isn't hungry and won't finish his/her meals?**

1. Talk to your dietitian about making the meals smaller within the correct calorie intake for your child.
2. You could increase the number of meals in the day for your child so each meal is smaller in quantity of food.
3. Calories for snacks could be decreased or snacks could be eliminated.
4. Check your child's ketones. The ketogenic diet works by suppressing appetite so it is normal for a child who is ketotic on the ketogenic diet to not be as enthusiastic about his/her food. If you notice a recurring trend that your child doesn't want to eat when his/her ketones are high, then the level of ketosis may need to be lowered. If this is happening, discuss this with your registered dietitian.

➤ **What happens if my child no longer likes the keto meals s/he used to like?**

1. Don't use that meal at the present time. Re-introduce it later on again.
2. Try to make it look different such as by adding a couple drops of food colouring.
3. Try some new meals and foods which you haven't yet tried for your child.

If there are any solutions we are missing or good ones you have found, please let us know and we can add them to this educational tool!



If you have any questions please connect with your ketogenic diet team or Matthew's Friends Canada. Other publications are available to support you. Feel free to contact us:

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