Diabetes: Continue to maintain before meal blood glucose less than 150. You may be admitted to the hospital for insulin infusion to control your glucose better.

Day of Surgery

Diabetes: Insulin infusion may be started in the operating room to keep your glucose between 80-110 mg/dl and continued in the Intensive Care Unit through the night. Your glucose will be checked every hour to make sure it stays in that range. At this time your stress hormones and medications can affect how well your own insulin controls your BG.

Day 1 through 3 After Surgery

Diabetes: Intravenous insulin may continue for first 24 hours after surgery. Then it will be changed to single insulin injections if needed. As your eating and activity advances, the nurses will regulate your insulin dose and restart your “pre-op” medications in response to your glucose. Your glucose will be rechecked at least every 4 hours, but sometimes more frequently to keep your glucose less than 130 mg/dl. If necessary, the insulin will be continued as an infusion.

No Diabetes: If you need insulin to keep your glucose less than 130 mg/dl while in the hospital, you will check your glucose level at home. If needed, you will take insulin. Before going home, the Cardiovascular Unit nurses will show you and family member how to check your blood glucose and do the insulin injections. As your body returns to normal, your glucose will likely return to normal. Then, you will be able to stop blood glucose checks and insulin injections.

When you return home, you will receive a telephone call from the Diabetes Educator from St Joseph Nutrition and Diabetes Clinic to help you.

Remember: Keep a record of your glucose levels; and bring your records and medication list when seeing your doctor and Diabetes Educator.
Why should I care about my blood glucose level?

Unless you currently have diabetes, you probably do not think about your blood glucose or blood sugar. During and after your surgery, your health care team will be watching your blood glucose very closely. This brochure explains why.

Heart surgery causes your body to release stress hormones. These hormones cause you to be less sensitive to insulin. Insulin is a chemical that helps you use sugars or carbohydrates for energy. The body’s normal response during recovery may include higher blood glucose than normal. If you have diabetes, this response will likely cause a change in your blood sugar medications.

High blood glucose causes major changes in the body’s ability to work, recover, and heal. Studies have shown that patients who have well-controlled glucose levels during and after surgery spend less time in the hospital and experience lower rates of infection and death.

What can I do?

- **Understand** that the normal glucose level is very important for your heart and immune system during and after heart surgery.
- **A temporary rise** in glucose levels is expected with heart surgery. It usually returns to normal during your recovery and does not necessarily mean that you have diabetes.
- **Know** that your nurse may need to be more attentive than you’d like to keep your glucose level in a safe range.
- **Ask** your physicians and assisting team about how your BG levels will be managed, and by whom.
- **Keep a record of your glucose levels;** and bring your records and medication list when seeing your doctor and Diabetes Educator.
- **Relax as much as possible** and allow us to guide you through this stressful time.
- **Ask any question** you have about your BG monitoring and medications. Call Diabetes Educators: (360) 715-6558. Surgeon office: see number below.