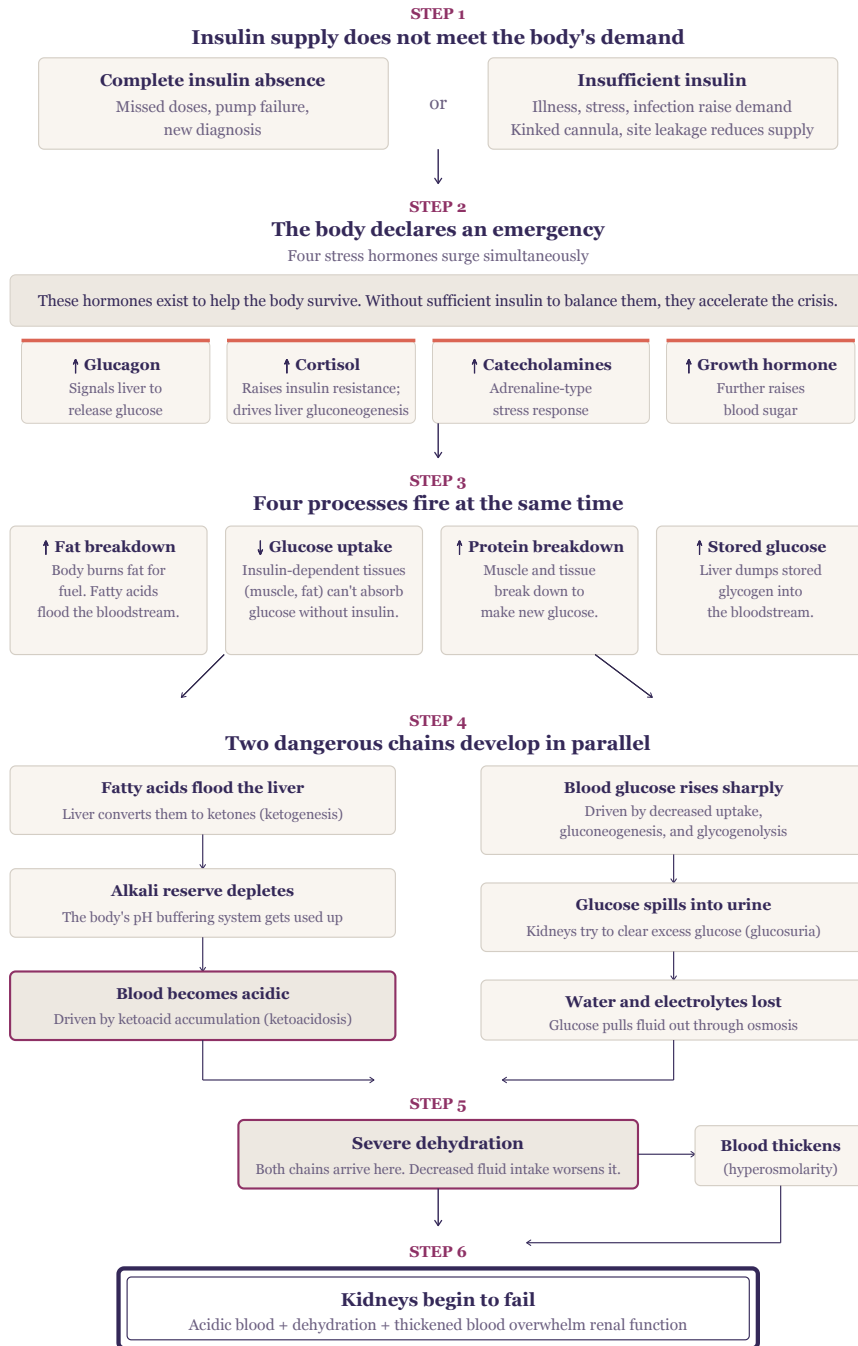


How DKA develops

The biological cascade — in plain language

Based on Wolfsdorf, Glaser, and Sperling



What this feels like as it progresses

The body signals distress long before the crisis is complete
Progression varies — these are not fixed timelines

Early (typically hours 0–4)

Elevated glucose readings. Thirst. Frequent urination. Fatigue.

Middle (typically hours 4–10)

Nausea. Abdominal pain. Headache. Fruity breath (ketones). Increasing discomfort.

Late (typically 10+ hours)

Vomiting. Confusion. Extreme weakness. Medical emergency.

The key insight from this cascade

Every step takes time. Every step produces symptoms.

Source: Wolfsdorf, Glaser, and Sperling — ISPAD Clinical Practice Consensus Guidelines on DKA Management
This graphic is for educational purposes only and does not constitute medical advice. Always consult your care team.