

Children and Type 1 diabetes

When a child is diagnosed with type 1 diabetes, the role of a caregiver becomes more important than ever. Family life and daily routines may seem more complicated in the beginning. Over time, and with the support of your diabetes team, this will change. You will discover that your child can have a healthy and fulfilling life with diabetes.

Caring for a Child with Diabetes

Testing blood glucose (sugar) and giving insulin may seem overwhelming in the beginning. As you work with your diabetes team you will learn about diabetes and become more confident. It is important that you become comfortable with caring for your child's diabetes so that you can help your child become comfortable too.

As the caregiver of a child with type 1 diabetes, you will help them with:

- Monitoring blood glucose
- Administering insulin
- Having regular meals and snacks
- Balancing food, medication and physical activity
- Recognizing the signs of low and high blood glucose

Talking to Your Child about Diabetes

The way you talk to your child about diabetes will have a big impact on how they perceive their diabetes and themselves. Being positive and supportive will help boost your child's self-esteem.

- Talk to your child about how foods fit into a healthy lifestyle. For example, no single food should be described as "bad" or "junk".
- Describe blood glucose levels as "in target", "high", or "low". Try to avoid describing blood glucose levels as "good" or "bad".
- Remember that diabetes is only one part of a child's life. Talk to you child about other important things that are happening in their life such as school, sports and social events.



Involving Other Caregivers

It is important that other caregivers understand your child's diabetes and know how to care for them. Members of your child's diabetes care team can provide education to others. Consider providing other caregivers with:

- A schedule of blood glucose monitoring times and insulin requirements
- A meal and snack plan
- A treatment plan for low blood glucose
- A treatment plan for high blood glucose
- Contact information for emergency situations

Involving a Child in Diabetes Care

Encourage your child to be involved in their diabetes care right from the beginning. Identify reasonable tasks that your child can do for themselves. Even young children can pick which finger is to be tested and read the numbers on the meter. As they become more independent, children can take on more of a role in their diabetes care, with parental support.

Across the country, the Canadian Diabetes Association is leading the fight against diabetes by helping people with diabetes live healthy lives while we work to find a cure. Our community-based network of supporters help us provide education and services to people living with diabetes, advocate for our cause, break ground towards a cure and translate research into practical applications.

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