

Having a Good Time at School

During school time too, food intake, activities and medication have to be balanced. With good support from school staff, your child can manage his/her diabetes more or less independently. To keep kids with diabetes healthy and safe at school, a dedicated adult should be there to assist with blood sugar checks, insulin injections, meals and activities – if necessary. Encouraging independence while support is at hand should allow your child to have a good school experience and be fully included and accepted.

Birthdays and Celebrations

Let your child have fun at special events! Diabetes should not prevent participation in parties, school events, games or sports contests. Ask the organiser about the planned activities, when and what type of food will be offered.

Involve your child in planning the day, for example, if meals need to be split or snacks have to be added. This way she/he can eat together with the other kids. Contact your diabetes coach for their input and suggestions – these can be very useful.

It's good to celebrate traditions and family holidays together, though some of the food may have to be adjusted. New traditions that centre on playing, outdoor activities and fun are good alternatives.



For more information and personalized advice about diabetes and children, please contact your Healthcare Professional.

Would you like to know more about diabetes?
Please visit our website:

www.diabetes.ascensia.co.za



CUSTOMER SERVICE HELPLINE

0800 246 243

Caution: This brochure does not replace your Healthcare Professional advice.

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My Child has Diabetes



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The First Steps

It can be an emotional challenge to find out that your child has diabetes. The best way to cope is to get involved and learn about the disease, take part in the daily schedule and diabetes management.

Over time, your child will grow older and become more independent, but you will remain a very important member of your child's healthcare team.

Diabetes in Children – Causes and Risk Factors

The exact cause of type 1 diabetes in children is unknown.

The risk of a child developing type 2 diabetes is linked to a number of factors, including:

- Obesity and inactivity
- Genetics and family history of type 2 diabetes
- Diabetes of the child's mother during pregnancy
- Ethnicity. High risk for type 2 diabetes are Asian, Hispanic, African or Aboriginal

Managing your Child's Diabetes

It may seem like a difficult task to monitor blood sugar and to inject the right dose of insulin (if prescribed), and you might even feel afraid at first. But don't worry – your diabetes healthcare team will be there for you every step of the way and help you to become more self-reliant. When you are more relaxed with your child's diabetes care, your child will also feel more confident.

As the parent, you will be responsible for:

- Providing regular meals, drinks and snacks
- Testing blood sugar
- Giving the right dose of insulin (if prescribed)
- Managing the correct balance of meals, exercise and medication
- Watching for symptoms of low and high blood sugar levels

Tips for Making Blood Sugar Monitoring and Insulin Injections Easier

Achieving good diabetes management is a learning process for you and your child. If you take a playful approach, it will be easier to develop a routine that works for you both.

- Get comfortable by playing your child's favourite music or singing a song.
- Lighten the mood by telling a joke or talking about good things.
- Let your child playfully pretend to give a shot to you or a cuddly toy.
- Help your child breathe deeply by giving him/her some soap bubbles to blow before the prick or injection.
- Caress the area where the skin will be pierced.
- Hug and praise your child for showing such courage.
- Remember that it is easier if it is also fun.

Checking your Child's Blood Sugar is Important

To prevent the negative consequences of diabetes, blood sugar levels should be kept within the healthy range. Blood sugar monitoring is carried out with a 'blood glucose meter' or 'blood glucose monitor'. You simply take a drop of blood by pricking a finger and the meter tells you how much sugar is in the blood at that time.

The Timing of Blood Sugar Checks

Food, physical activities and medication are the major factors that influence blood sugar levels. It's best to check blood sugar often enough in order to capture your child's blood sugar reactions to these factors, so that modifications can be made where necessary. Your diabetes healthcare team will help you define when and how often your child's blood sugar should be checked.



Healthy Eating can be Fun

- Involve your kids when preparing food – they will enjoy it more!
- Always eat a healthy breakfast together
- After school, have some yogurt, cut vegetables or fruit ready
- Whole fruits are better because they contain more fibre
- Try to vary the vegetables and recipes
- Reduce carbohydrate-rich snacks such as crisps and sweets
- Exchange sugary drinks for water or low-fat milk (1 or 2%)
- Allow no more than 125 ml of 100% fruit juice per day

Find Activities your Child Likes

Apart from positive effects on body weight, physical activities can bring many benefits: social contacts, new friends, and more confidence. In the long run, the body will respond with more stable blood sugar levels.

- Motivate your child to try different sports and find one or two that she/he likes best.
- Physical activity can lower your child's blood sugar, notably with insulin therapy. Therefore, **it is important to check your child's blood sugar before, during and after exercising.**
- Reducing your child's insulin dose or eating a bit more might be needed to prevent an episode of low blood sugar.
- Blood sugar levels can fall too low if your child takes insulin – especially during prolonged activities of more than 30 minutes.
- In case the blood sugar drops too low, a sugary snack or drink should always be handy.
- **Caution!** Even long after finishing the activity, blood sugar levels can fall too low. On days with activities, make sure to check your child's blood sugar level and – if necessary – give him/her an extra snack to prevent night-time lows.