

QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE TO DIABETES FOR HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS

A special project of the Michigan Diabetes Outreach Network

Chapter 17

Special Issues: Concerns of Children

Parents and children need to accomplish ordinary tasks in each development stage of childhood. The main job of a child is to grow.

Parent Roles

- Set regular meal and snack times for your child.
- You are responsible for selecting the foods offered and determining snack and meal times.
- Everyone in the family can and should eat the same foods. Children with diabetes do not need special foods.
- Some of the sugar-free items (sugar-free soda, gelatin or pudding) may be helpful if your child needs less carbohydrate at a snack or meal.
- Set a good example. Eat what you want your children to eat.
- Provide your child with support and show interest in your child's diabetes care.
- Provide your child with more snacks (or less insulin) if activity level goes up.
- If a child won't eat and extra carbohydrate is needed, have some options available (examples: juice, regular soda, crackers).
- Be aware of behavior changes (crying, irritability) that may signal a low blood glucose level.
- Always be prepared (glucagon kit, extra carbohydrate sources, insulin, testing supplies, etc).

Children with diabetes...

- Need to eat when hungry.
- Need to grow and develop.
- Need to have insulin and meal plan adjusted to fit their lifestyles.
- Need to take gradual charge of their diabetes with parental support.
- Need to be able to do the things other children do.
- May benefit from attending summer camp for children with diabetes.

Type 2 Diabetes in Youth...

- While children with or at risk for type 2 diabetes may be overweight, most of the above guidelines are still applicable.
- Type 2 diabetes in youth can be greatly modified by lifestyle changes.
- It is important for the whole family to be supportive, focusing on eating well and increasing physical activity. This way everyone can be healthier.
- Teach children to tune in to their body signals, so they can learn to eat when physically hungry and stop before they are too full.
- Avoid using food as a reward
- Eat regular meals and snacks. Don't forget to eat breakfast!
- Aim for 5 a day (fruit and vegetable servings).
- Reduce or eliminate sweetened drinks. Have water instead.
- Move more. Sit less. Limit screen time to a maximum of 2 hours a day.
- Realize some overweight children may do well to just maintain their weight until they can grow into it.
- Let your child know he or she is accepted unconditionally, whatever his or her weight.

Surviving Sick Days...

- Continue taking insulin.
- Stay close to the meal plan.
 - Maintain the same meal times and number of carbohydrates as in a normal day. If your child has an upset stomach and can't eat, give her clear liquids that contain carbohydrates
- Give plenty of liquids
- Choose medications wisely
 - Many over the counter medications contain sugar and/or alcohol. If you are unable to find glucose free versions, account for the extra carbohydrates in the meal plan.
 - If the medication contains alcohol it could lower blood glucose levels. If your child takes a medication that contains alcohol make sure they eat something with the medication to help prevent hypoglycemia.
- Check blood glucose and ketone levels frequently.
 - Diabetic Ketoacidosis is a danger whenever your child is sick. Make sure to check your child's blood glucose levels frequently. Also be sure to check for ketones several times throughout the day.

Activity Guidelines for Children and Adolescents...

- Children and adolescents should engage in 1 hour or more of physical activity every day.
- The majority of the hour should be moderate or vigorous intensity aerobic activity.
- Children and adolescents should take part in vigorous-intensity activity on at least 3 days per week
- Children and adolescents should also do muscle-strengthening and bone strengthening activity on at least 3 days per week.

In the School Setting...

- Parents and the health care team should work together to provide the school and day care providers with the information necessary to allow children with diabetes to participate fully and safely in school.
- For a guide on helping the student with diabetes in school, go to: http://www.ndep.nih.gov/diabetes/pubs/Youth_NDEPSchoolGuide.pdf

References:

American Diabetes Association. www.diabetes.org

Healthy Kids Healthy Weight: Tips for Families with Kids of all Shapes and Sizes; Michigan Department of Community Health, Michigan Department of Education: www.mihealthtools.org/schools

The Surgeon General's Call to Action to Prevent and Decrease Overweight and Obesity: *Overweight in Children and Adolescents*: <http://www.surgeongeneral.gov/topics/obesity/>

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services: 2008 Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans. www.health.gov/paguidelines/