

## Let's Talk About...

# Teacher Information About Type 1 Diabetes

Type 1 diabetes is a disorder that happens when a person's body can no longer make insulin. Insulin is the body's natural way to use glucose. Glucose is a type of sugar; the body's cells need glucose for energy. Insulin is the key that opens the door of the body's cells so the glucose can get to the cells. Glucose comes from many foods, mainly carbohydrates like breads, pasta, cereals, fruits, sweet drinks, milk, and starchy vegetables.

Children with Type 1 Diabetes may have high levels of glucose in their blood. They eat enough glucose (by eating carbohydrates), but they do not make enough insulin for the cells to use that glucose. High blood glucose can be dangerous or even life-threatening if it is not treated.

Type 1 diabetes is treated with insulin injections given with all carbohydrate intake (for example, snacks, and meals). Eating alone cannot control type 1 diabetes in children. Type 1 Diabetes cannot be treated with pills. Diabetes is not contagious. Diabetes is not caused from eating "too much sugar."

## What is hypoglycemia (low blood glucose) and what do I do?

With Type 1 Diabetes, a child's blood glucose may drop too low. This is called "low blood glucose" or hypoglycemia (hi-poe-gliy-SEE-me-ah). This situation is most likely to occur:

- If the child misses or does not finish a meal or snack, especially after taking insulin
- During or after physical activity

You may see these symptoms. The child may be or exhibit these:

- Unusually sleepy
- Sweat
- Confused
- Pale skin
- Moody or combative
- Shaky
- Daydream
- Suddenly hungry
- Lack concentration
- Cry
- Lack coordination
- Have a headache
- Feel "weird"

## What should I do?

Treat hypoglycemia immediately. If you cannot check the child's blood glucose and the child has symptoms (see above), treat the child by giving him one of the following:

- ½ cup of juice (any kind)
- ½ can of regular soda pop (not diet)
- 3 to 4 glucose tablets
- 1 cup or carton of milk

The child's blood glucose should be above 90 mg/dl within 15-20 minutes. If the blood sugar is not above 90mg/dl or the student still has symptoms, repeat the treatment. A teacher or staff member should stay with the

student until he is more responsive and able to resume normal activity. If the symptoms do not get better or the blood sugar is not above 90 mg/dl after treatment, contact the child's parent.

## What is Hyperglycemia (high blood glucose) and what do I do?

With Type 1 Diabetes, sometimes a child's blood glucose will be too high. This is called hyperglycemia (hi-per-gly-SEE-me-ah). It may be caused by:

- Illness
- Eating too much
- Missing an insulin dose
- Stress

You may see the child have the following symptoms:

- Drinks lots of water
- Urinates (pees) more than usual
- Less able to concentrate

## What should I do?

- Allow the child unlimited access to water and the restroom.
- If symptoms persists or if the child's blood glucose meter reading is above 300mg/dl, follow the instructions on the student's Diabetes Medical Management Plan (DMMP).
- Notify the parents.

## What kind of nutrition do children with Type 1 Diabetes need?

The most widely used form of meal planning for people with diabetes is carbohydrate counting. It is the most accurate way to match food and insulin. Most children with diabetes have to count the amount of carbohydrates in their school meals.

It is helpful for the child to have school menus and to have nutrition information for foods served at school.

Some children with diabetes need a regular mid-morning and mid-afternoon snack so their blood glucose level does not drop too low. They may need an extra snack if the class is going to be more physically active than normal. This will keep the glucose levels from dropping too low because of extra physical activity.