

Let's Talk About...

Diabetes: Information for teachers

What is diabetes?

Diabetes is a metabolic disorder that affects the body's ability to balance blood glucose (sugar), which is raised by certain foods, especially carbohydrates (carbs). Diabetes is not contagious and is not caused by eating too much sugar.

What do I need to know?

Insulin and carbs

Children who have diabetes are almost always treated with insulin. This means they need to take insulin anytime they have a snack or meal that contains carbs. The amount of insulin they need depends on the amount of carbs they eat and their sensitivity to insulin.

Children usually receive insulin by injection or with a pump. A student who has type 1 diabetes cannot be treated with pills.

Hypoglycemia

Hypoglycemia [hy-poh-gly-SEE-mee-uh] is the medical term for low blood glucose. Hypoglycemia can be dangerous for anyone with diabetes.

Hypoglycemia is most likely to occur:

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

Common signs and symptoms are:

- Sleepiness
- Sweating
- Confusion
- Pale skin
- Crying
- Moodiness or combativeness
- Grumpiness
- Headaches
- Shakiness
- Sudden hunger
- Lack of concentration
- Feeling "weird"

What do I need to know about hypoglycemia?

Hypoglycemia should be treated immediately. If a meter is not available and the child has symptoms, notify the office. **A child with hypoglycemia should not be left alone or sent to the office by themselves.** If a blood glucose meter is available, check your student's blood glucose level. If it is below 80mg/dL, treat according to the instructions below.

- 1 Give 15 grams (g) of rapid-acting carbs.** For example:
 - ½ cup juice or regular soda (not diet)
 - 1 fruit roll-up or a small package of fruit snacks
 - 3 to 4 glucose tablets, or 1 tube of glucose gel
 - 1 cup skim or low-fat milk

Wait 15 minutes for the treatment to work and then check the student's blood glucose levels. Don't keep feeding your student until the symptoms go away. If they eat too much, their blood glucose can get too high.

If the hypoglycemia is within 15 minutes of lunch, give 15 g of carbs. Then, give the correct amount of insulin to cover lunch, but do not include the extra 15g of carbs in the insulin dose. Check the student's blood glucose 30 minutes after they have finished eating.

- 2 If the student's blood glucose remains below 80 mg/dL after eating 15 g of carbs:**
 - Have the student eat another 15g of carbs.
 - Check their blood glucose again in 15 minutes. **If it's still below 80mg/dL, give 30g of carbs and call their parents or healthcare provider. Make sure someone stays with the student during this time.**
- 3 If the student's blood glucose is between 80mg/dL and 100mg/dL and it will be 30 minutes or more before the next meal or snack, give another small snack with 15 grams of carbs and some protein. Check again in 1 hour.**
- 4 Learn how and when to use an emergency glucagon/glucagen kit.**

