

Type 1 Diabetes

What causes type 1 diabetes?

Type 1 diabetes occurs during childhood and in young adults when the body destroys beta cells in the pancreas. These are the cells that produce insulin. It is not the result of consuming too much sugar. No one knows why the cells are destroyed, but it could be hereditary or due to a virus. The process does not happen overnight; it is a long process. One day we hope to identify the early signs of diabetes to discover how to cure this disease.

Basic treatments

Type 1 diabetes can be controlled through a healthy diet, regular exercise and with insulin. Diabetes pills do not work for people with type 1 diabetes.

It is important to monitor blood glucose (sugar) levels to manage diabetes. The blood sugar levels that should be achieved vary according to the child's age. By monitoring glucose (sugar) values in the blood, we can observe certain trends or patterns, and these can help us find the best way to treat diabetes.

A healthy eating plan benefits the whole family. Everyone will be healthier and less likely to be obese, have high blood pressure or have type 2 diabetes or heart disease.

There are several ways to plan meals. Carbohydrates such as sugar and starches increase blood sugar to the maximum. These should be consumed with care. Fat and protein do not raise blood sugar levels very much, but everything has to be balanced to promote good health.

The good thing is that sugar can be included in the diet, provided it is in moderate amounts. Nobody should consume too much sugar, so it is important to be very careful in choosing very sugary foods. A professional dietitian can teach family members to eat well without being too strict.

Feeding your child should not be a daily struggle. It is up to parents to offer the best possible foods, while the child has the right to decide how much to eat. With new types of insulin available, it is easier to adjust the doses to cover picky appetites and maintain glucose at normal levels.



What will you need to learn?

Aside from good eating habits, the family will have to learn to:

- ▶ Administer insulin
- ▶ Manage the ups and downs of blood sugar levels
- ▶ Cope with days when the child is sick
- ▶ Adjust the insulin dosage and food as the activity level changes

The family will have to work closely with the child's teachers, the school food services manager, the activity leaders and the school nurse.

If you meet with them at the beginning of the school year, they will probably feel more comfortable with supporting your

child. They will need to know about the snacks the child should eat and how to handle the reaction when blood sugar levels go down. And they will need to know how to monitor blood glucose and insulin during school hours.

As they grow, children begin to take on more of their own diabetes care. This requires good communication between the child, the medical team and the rest of the family. It may be best to seek the support of a social worker or psychologist during this transition.

A child with diabetes does not need to stop doing his or her normal activities; he or she might just need to plan more and do things in more original ways. With a good perspective, you can look at diabetes as a real opportunity for the family to enjoy a life as healthy as possible.

Questions

1. What alternatives do you know in terms of planning your child's diet in the healthiest way possible?
2. How often should blood glucose levels be checked?
3. How are insulin and food adjusted when blood sugar levels are high or low?
4. At school, who needs to receive instructions on diabetes care?

Prepared by Connie Crawley, MS, RD, LD • Nutrition and Health Specialist • Publication No. FDNS-E -11-6a-SP

The Cooperative Extension Service and the Faculty of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences at the University of Georgia offer educational programs, assistance and materials to all without regard to race, color, country of origin, sex or disability.

An entity that offers equal opportunities and affirmative action and that is committed to achieving diversity among its employees.

National Diabetes Education Program
For more information, call 1-800-CDC-INFO (800-232-4636)
TTY 1- (888) 232-6348 or visit www.cdc.gov/info.
To request resources, visit www.cdc.gov/diabetes/ndep.



November 2016