

KEEPING STUDENTS WITH DIABETES SAFE AT SCHOOL

Why is diabetes care needed at school?

- Diabetes must be managed 24/7.
- Effective management is crucial to prevent short-term complications such as life-threatening low blood glucose (sugar) levels, (known as hypoglycemia) and long-term complications such as heart and kidney disease, blindness, and amputation.
- Appropriate school diabetes care enhances a student's ability to learn and to participate fully in all school activities.

School Diabetes Care Success Stories:

My son collapsed in the locker room at school. Lucky for us, his school's health room assistant had just been trained in glucagon administration. She took one look at him and immediately knew what to do.
-Blanca Dennis, Parent, Orange County, Florida-

Training teachers, school secretaries, and other school staff members has enhanced the ability of our school nurses to provide safe and timely care to our students with diabetes. We have had an outpouring of school staff volunteer to be trained.
-Cathy Sturgeon, RN, BSN, Coordinator of Student Health Services, Loudoun County (VA) Public Schools-

What tasks are necessary to provide appropriate diabetes care at school?

- Blood glucose monitoring.
- Recognition and treatment of dangerously high or low blood glucose (sugar) levels.
- Insulin and glucagon administration.
- Consumption of appropriate food and access to food when needed.
- Participation in physical activity.

The teachers and staff at my son's elementary school have been amazing. They participated in a training offered by local nurses, and have been key team members in keeping my son safe at school.
-Nell German, Parent, Chillicothe, IL-

How should care be provided to ensure the safety of a student with diabetes?

- Students who have necessary level of skills and knowledge should be permitted to perform self-care.
- Some students will need a trained adult to perform care or assist with a diabetes care tasks.
- All students will need help in the event of a diabetes emergency.

I was on call the morning one of my patient's teachers called to tell me she had administered glucagon to him during an overnight field trip. The teacher checked the student's blood glucose which was 30 and then she administered glucagon. She administered the injection and by the time she called me the student was awake and wondering why an ambulance was waiting to take him to the Emergency Room which was 40 miles away. This teacher saved precious time in administering glucagon.

-Linda Siminerio, RN, PhD, CDE,
Pittsburgh, PA –

I believe it is imperative that students have access to blood glucose testing, insulin, and glucagon and are allowed to test their blood glucose levels in the classroom. I checked my first grade student's blood sugar as I was teaching. It has never been an interruption and I feel good because I understand the importance of taking immediate action in the prevention of low blood sugar and long-term complications.

-Christi Bach, Elementary School Teacher-

Three principles of safe school diabetes care are:

- All school staff members, who have responsibility for a student with diabetes need basic diabetes knowledge.
- The school nurse holds the primary role of providing and coordinating care. However, a small group of school staff members should be trained to provide back-up care when the school nurse is not available during the school day or at field trips or extracurricular activities. These staff members should be school personnel who have volunteered to do these tasks and need not be health care professionals.
- Students possessing the necessary skills and maturity should be permitted to self-manage their diabetes in the classroom or wherever they are in conjunction with a school activity.