

PATIENT INFORMATION

PAEDIATRIC DIABETES – How I look after my Diabetes at School



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Informing school

Your Paediatric Diabetes Specialist Nurse (PDSN), together with your parent/guardian will inform both your school and the school nurse that you have developed diabetes.

Your PDSN will go to talk to your school staff and give them written information about how to help you care for your diabetes in school. She will also arrange an Individual Health Care Plan (IHCP) to explain what your needs will be for your medical condition in school. This will be agreed by the young person, parents, your paediatric diabetes nurse and with school.

You and your parents must also inform your school about your diabetes. It is advisable to provide school with an emergency box for hypos, exercise and extra snacks. If you are an older young person, you may also choose to carry your hypo treatment and blood glucose meter with you.

Your emergency box should contain:

- A small bottle of sugary drink or mini cans of cola/lemonade or a carton of fruit juice.
- Dextrose or Lucozade tablets
- Glucogel (available on prescription)
- Small packet of plain biscuits
- 1 or 2 Jaffa cakes or alternative for PE/ sports or exercise
- Contact numbers i.e. Parents, PDSN, in case of an emergency
- A list of personal hypo symptoms and how to treat

Put your name on the box and ask that it is kept in a safe accessible place.

You will also need to ensure your insulin is stored in a safe place and if you are on pump therapy, that you have a spare supply of insulin, cannulas and batteries.

As routine you will have your blood glucose testing meter and blood ketone testing meter with you in school every day. In addition, some you will also be using a flash glucose meter in school.

Parents please re-stock it regularly

Snacks

If you need in between meal starchy snacks they can usually fit in at the same time as school break time. You will need to take your snacks to school with you, or keep a supply of snacks at school, or take money for appropriate tuck if your school has a tuck shop

School meals

It is your own choice whether you have school dinners or sandwiches. If you do have school dinners it is important that you eat carbohydrates/starchy food in your meal and that you have the right support for you to carbohydrate count.

Physical education/ sports/ exercise (P.E.)

Doing PE, sports or exercise is extra activity so you may need extra carbohydrates in addition to your snacks, or less insulin (reduction of insulin doses can be discussed with your Paediatric Diabetes Specialist Nurse – PDSN or Dietitian), to prevent your blood glucose going low. **Be aware that Primary school PE may not be very energetic and therefore may not require extra snacks.**

- It is advisable to have 10 or 20 grams of high energy carbohydrates like, Jaffa cakes or jelly sweets before doing exercise, or a sugary pudding if exercise is immediately after a meal, and every 30 - 45 minutes during exercise. This is a guide and will be discussed with you as to your personal requirements.
- You may also reduce your breakfast, lunch or evening meal fast acting insulin depending on when the exercise is during the day. Your Diabetes nurse will discuss with you in more depth.
- There is no reason for you to miss out on doing **any** kind of exercise or activity. Exercise is good for everyone. It will keep you fit and healthy.

School trips

There is no reason why you cannot join in with all school trips. If you are staying away with school, then you can inform your PDSN who will advise school how to help you look after your diabetes. Alternatively, you or your parents can let the school know about your needs.

Plan ahead, be organised and take **everything** you may need for the time you are away including your Hypo emergency box, insulin pump extras, blood glucose monitoring equipment and insulin treatment. If your trip is going to be very active, then you should reduce your insulin doses so you can enjoy yourself and not go hypo.

Hypos (low blood sugars)

As already mentioned, your spare hypo treatment should be kept in your emergency box in school. It is advisable to put your hypo signs on the top of the box and have a copy of the IHCP in the box. You could also keep dextrose/ lucozade tablets with you (older children).

- Never ignore your hypo signs, they will never go away, they will just get worse.
- Inform your teacher that you are having a hypo and you need to treat it.
- If you have to leave your lesson, you should never be sent to fetch your own emergency foods, someone should go for you.
- You should never be left alone when having a hypo.
- Once a hypo is treated properly then you should be able to continue with your lesson.

Exams

During exams you may become stressed or anxious, which may cause your blood sugars to rise or fall. Monitor your blood sugars regularly during these times. You will need to take snacks and hypo treatment into exams. Inform the exam teacher why you have food with you and make sure it is carried in a clear container and is not noisy like crisps!

Blood testing at school

Some young people like to keep a good eye on their control, especially if they have been ill, newly diagnosed or have changed their insulin regimen or routine in general.

School will allow you to test, the medical room or classrooms are good places. Dispose of sharps (lancets and needles) safely, by putting them in a sharps bin or taking them home to dispose of. You should not test other people or friends to prevent possible cross infection.

Friends

It is a good idea to let your friends know about your diabetes and how to recognise and treat a hypo. You probably spend much of your time with your friends, and they usually know you the best. They are usually the ones to notice if you are feeling unwell or if it is time for a snack.

Insulin Injections

Your PDSN will inform school that you need an insulin injection at lunchtime. Storage of your insulin and where to inject needs to be discussed with school staff as part of your IHCP. It depends on where you are comfortable, but some schools prefer you to use the medical room. You can provide the school with a sharps bin from your GP prescription to dispose of used needles. When it is full, seal it and take it home to dispose of at your chemist – see the leaflet about safe sharps disposal. Then provide the school with a new one.

If your symptoms or condition worsens, or if you are concerned about anything, please call your GP, 111, or 999.

Patient Experience

We know that being admitted to hospital can be a difficult and unsettling time for you and your loved ones. If you have any questions or concerns, please do speak with a member of staff on the ward or in the relevant department who will do their best to answer your questions and reassure you.

Feedback

Feedback is really important and useful to us – it can tell us where we are working well and where improvements can be made. There are lots of ways you can share your experience with us including completing our Friends and Family Test – cards are available and can be posted on all wards, departments and clinics at our hospitals. We value your comments and feedback and thank you for taking the time to share this with us.

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

If you have any concerns or questions about your care, we advise you to talk with the nurse in charge or the department manager in the first instance as they are best placed to answer any questions or resolve concerns quickly. If the relevant member of staff is unable to help resolve your concern, you can contact the PALS Team. We offer informal help, advice or support about any aspect of hospital services & experiences.

Our PALS team will liaise with the various departments in our hospitals on your behalf, if you feel unable to do so, to resolve your problems and where appropriate refer to outside help.

If you are still unhappy you can contact the Complaints Department, who can investigate your concerns. You can make a complaint orally, electronically or in writing and we can advise and guide you through the complaints procedure.

How to contact PALS:

Telephone Patient Services: 0300 123 1732 or via email at: wah-tr.PALS@nhs.net

Opening times:

The PALS telephone lines are open Monday to Friday from 8.30am to 4.00pm. Please be aware that you may need to leave a voicemail message, but we aim to return your call within one working day.

If you are unable to understand this leaflet, please communicate with a member of staff.