

Type 1 Diabetes Management

About 34 million people in the U.S. are living with diabetes. Of these, about 5 percent have been diagnosed with Type 1 diabetes.

While learning that you or your child has diabetes can be upsetting, proper steps can be taken to control your health and prevent serious complications from arising.

What is Type 1 diabetes?

Healthy bodies produce and use insulin to regulate the amount of glucose, or sugar, in the bloodstream. With Type 1 diabetes, the body is unable to produce insulin on its own, requiring the use of insulin injections.

Type 1 diabetes is usually diagnosed in children or young adults. The most common signs of Type 1 diabetes are increased urination and thirst and weight loss, even though appetite is increased. If you suspect your child has Type 1 diabetes, talk to his or her pediatrician about tests that can measure blood glucose levels.

Control

Since Type 1 diabetes cannot be prevented or cured, learning to treat it properly can enable you and your child to live a happy and healthy life. Treatment will vary for each individual, and plans should be shared with family members, teachers, caregivers and other adults who may need to have this information.

People with Type 1 diabetes need to learn to balance their food intake with exercise levels in order to help regulate blood sugar levels. Food increases blood sugar, while insulin and exercise decrease blood sugar.

The main areas that need to be considered are:

- **Eating habits:** People with Type 1 diabetes should try to eat on a regular schedule in order to maintain blood-sugar levels. Snacks will play an important role in managing blood sugar, as will proper planning for special activities, such as parties and long trips.
- **Checking blood-sugar level:** Regular monitoring of blood-sugar level is an important part of managing Type 1 diabetes. If your child has diabetes, you should teach him or her to monitor these levels. Preparing a written plan or creating a game can help children with this task, whether at home or away.
- **Adjusting insulin level:** People with Type 1 diabetes will need to use insulin injections in order to help their bodies process glucose. Teaching your child how to administer these injections is a good way to help him or her take more control over the disease.

- **Exercise:** Regular exercise is important because it can help to lower blood sugar. It can also help children to feel more normal and participate in activities with their friends.

Complications

If a person with diabetes does not follow treatment guidelines, he or she runs a high risk of serious health complications. These result from the uncontrolled high level of glucose in the blood, which over time damages organs and tissue.

Three of the more common complications of Type 1 diabetes are:

- **Hyperglycemia (high blood sugar):** This is caused by a buildup of sugar in the blood and is a major cause of many other complications. It occurs when there is not enough insulin in the body. Regular blood sugar level checks can help to prevent hyperglycemia.
- **Ketoacidosis:** Acids, or ketones, can build up in the blood if insulin levels are too low. This is a serious condition that can lead to a diabetic coma, or even death, if it goes untreated. Ketoacidosis usually occurs gradually but can be accelerated during an illness. Talk to your doctor about the right ketone level for you and about a plan to test these levels.
- **Hypoglycemia (low blood sugar):** This condition occurs when blood sugar is too low. The symptoms include shakiness, dizziness, hunger or headaches. If you experience these symptoms, you should check your blood sugar level to verify that it is low. If you cannot check your level, you should eat something that contains sugar just in case.

Other complications of Type 1 diabetes can include the following:

- Heart disease
- Eye disease
- Kidney disease
- Nerve damage
- Skin disorders
- Foot problems.

While the above complications may seem frightening and overwhelming, much can be done to prevent them. This means taking charge with annual medical checkups, testing and recording of blood glucose levels, and following the proper diet and exercise. Following these steps will not only improve physical well-being, but it will also give peace of mind that everything possible has been done to minimize future complications.

Resources

- American Diabetes Association: www.diabetes.org

Here when you need us.

Call: 844-207-5465

Online: guidanceresources.com

App: GuidanceNowSM

Web ID: LivingME

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