

DIABETES IN SCHOOLS

Adapting Life to Suit Success



ABOUT DIABETES

- **Nearly 21 million adults and children in the U.S. have diabetes.**
- Diabetes is a chronic illness in which the body does not produce insulin (type 1) or does not produce enough insulin or properly use it (type 2).
- Insulin is vital for everyday life because it converts sugar, starches or other food into energy.
- Diabetes is the **sixth deadliest disease** in the U.S.

Diabetes has no cure.



POSSIBLE LONG-TERM COMPLICATIONS

- Heart disease
 - Stroke
 - Kidney disease
 - Blindness
 - Nerve disease
 - Amputations
 - Impotence
- **These chronic complications may occur over time, especially if blood sugar levels are not controlled.**



SYMPTOMS

- Frequent urination
- Excessive thirst
- Extreme hunger
- Dramatic weight loss
- Irritability
- Weakness and fatigue
- Nausea and vomiting



These symptoms usually occur suddenly and can be deadly if left untreated.



Myths and Everyday Life



DIABETES MANAGEMENT AT SCHOOL



- **Diabetes management is 24/7...**
 - Every student with diabetes will be **different**
 - Constant **juggling** of insulin/medication with physical activity and food
 - Recognize the behaviors and signs of **“high” and “low” blood sugar levels**
 - A student with a diabetes emergency will need help from **school staff** (ex. low blood sugar)
 - Students with diabetes can do the **same every day activities** as students without diabetes



IMMEDIATE CONCERNS

- Hypoglycemia = low blood glucose
- Hyperglycemia = high blood glucose
- Ketoacidosis = ketone (acid) build up in the blood because there is not enough insulin in the body



SYMPTOMS TO LOOK FOR AS A TEACHER

MILD HYPOGLYCEMIA

(low blood sugar)



Shaky, weak, tired, pale



Quick-acting sugar snack
like juice, regular soda, glucose tabs



SYMPTOMS TO LOOK FOR AS A TEACHER

Bathroom breaks, water, insulin

**Increased urination, thirst,
blurry vision , nausea**

HYPERGLYCEMIA

(high blood sugar)



HANDOUT



DIABETES ON LEARNING

- Psychosocial issues
 - “Fitting in”
 - Anxiety
 - Insecurity
- Lack of concentration due to varied blood glucose levels
- Pulled from class time to test blood glucose levels
- School absenteeism
 - On average, children with diabetes miss six more school days per year compared to children without diabetes



LEARNING WITH DIABETES

- Diabetes is associated with diminished neuronal functioning that ultimately leads to cognitive dysfunction in areas including:
 - Intelligence
 - Learning
 - Memory
 - Information processing
 - Attention
 - Executive function
 - Visual motor integration
 - Academic achievement.
- Study found that students with T1D had significantly lower academic grades compared to those who were not diabetics



AS A TEACHER, YOU CAN HELP BY:

- Providing easy-access to **diabetes supplies**
- Ensuring students **eat snacks at a scheduled time** and make sure snacks are available to **treat low blood sugar**
- Allowing students reasonable time to **make up missed homework or tests**
- Learning about diabetes and complying with the individual **student's 504 and health care plans**



SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

- Plan ahead and ensure timely communication with parents for:
 - Parties
 - Camps
 - Sport days and excursions
 - Change in school routines
 - Detention
 - Special exam provisions



TEACHER RESOURCES

- [Field Trip Considerations Checklist](#)
- [Parent Letter with Snack Recommendations](#)
- [Parent Letter to Teachers](#)
- [Diabetes Cards](#)

