

## Diabetes: Sending Your Child to Day Care



Caring for a child with diabetes can be hard. You have a lot to keep track of, like providing a healthy diet, giving insulin, testing blood sugar, and making sure your child stays active. With all this to remember, you may have concerns about sending your child to day care.

Remember that planning and communication are key. Make sure the day care staff is informed about how to manage your child's diabetes. By planning ahead, you can make sure your child stays healthy.

### Have a treatment plan

Your doctor can help you make a written **treatment plan** for managing your child's diabetes.

Make sure all of your child's caregivers have this plan.

The treatment plan should include:

- When to check blood sugar and give insulin. Include your child's target blood sugar range and dose amounts for insulin.
- Your child's usual symptoms of low and high blood sugar.
- What to do for high and low blood sugar emergencies, and when to contact you.
- When to give meals and snacks, and what foods are best. Include instructions for parties and field trips.
- Instructions for testing urine for ketones and what to do if ketones are present.
- Emergency contact numbers, including your child's main caregivers and doctor.

You will need to provide the day care staff with all the materials and equipment needed to care for your child, including a monitor and supplies for blood sugar tests, insulin, syringes, glucagon (if needed), and supplies for testing urine for ketones. Make sure the staff knows how to use them.

When dropping your child off, tell the day care staff what your child's blood sugar readings and insulin doses have been. When you pick your child up, the staff should tell you what your child's blood sugar readings and insulin doses were during the day.

Make sure your child's treatment plan lists the caregivers who are responsible for handling diabetes care and emergency care. Your child's day care should provide an adult staff member and a backup person who:

- Can test and record your child's blood sugar.
- Know what to do for high and low blood sugar levels.
- Are trained to give insulin and glucagon, if needed.

- Can test your child's urine for blood or ketones and know what to do if the results are not normal.
- Know your child's meal and snack schedule and can remind your child when it is time to eat.

Your child should have permission to:

- Eat a snack anywhere, including the classroom.
- Use the restroom and get drinks when needed.
- See the nurse or other health staff when needed.
- Miss day care for doctor appointments.

### **Blood sugar emergencies**

High or low blood sugar levels can be scary, and they can be dangerous if not treated. Talk to your doctor about what to do when blood sugar gets very high or low. Put this information in your child's treatment plan.

The **warning signs of high blood sugar** include:

- Blurry vision.
- Having to urinate more than usual.
- Feeling very thirsty or hungry.

The **warning signs of low blood sugar** include:

- Sweating.
- Feeling shaky, weak, or dizzy.
- Feeling hungry.

Young children often cannot recognize symptoms of low blood sugar as well as adults, which puts them at risk for low blood sugar emergencies. Your child should never be left alone when his or her blood sugar level is low.

To prevent blood sugar emergencies, it is important to test blood sugar often and have quick-sugar snacks available. Make sure your child and the staff are comfortable with doing blood sugar tests at day care.

### **When to call for help**

**Call 911** anytime you think your child may need emergency care. Call if:

- Your child is unconscious or suddenly very sleepy. This is a sign of low blood sugar.
- Your child passes out, and his or her breath smells fruity. This is a sign of high blood sugar.

**Call your doctor now** or seek medical care right away if:

- Your child has low blood sugar that stays below his or her target range after eating some quick-sugar food.
- Your child has high blood sugar that stays above his or her target range after you follow the steps for high blood sugar.
- Your child has high blood sugar after taking a missed dose of insulin or taking an extra dose of insulin prescribed by the doctor.
- Your child has high blood sugar, and a urine test for ketones shows more than 2+ or moderate or higher ketones.