

Diabetes *Views*



Let the Holidays Begin!

By Lois E. Kiley, MS, RD, LDN

As we move into December, holiday and family time begins to take over. This usually means parties, family meals, and everything else revolving around food. When you have a child with diabetes, this can be stressful. How do we plan for a meal that lasts 2 hours? What if they are grazing all day? All they want are rolls and desserts! While these are common problems for all parents, they are even more challenging for parents of children with diabetes. How can you help keep their blood sugars under control? **It is all about the balance between food, exercise, and insulin.**

There are different strategies for managing your way through the holidays. Here are some suggestions:

- **Don't skip meals.** Have your child follow their typical meal pattern. Going into a holiday meal over-hungry because they skipped breakfast may cause them to overeat. Remember, we all make better choices when we are not starving.
- **Go over the menu** with your child beforehand. This will help you better estimate the carbs they will eat.
- **Make healthy food choices together.** Your child should not feel alone in making healthy choices. This is not just about diabetes; these are healthy choices your whole family should be making. Have everyone pick out their favorite dessert to have after dinner and save extra for tomorrow.

- **Encourage exercise!** Exercise is a great way to help lower blood sugars. This is good opportunity to get the whole family involved. Organize a family game of touch football, a walk, soccer game, or any activity your child enjoys.
- If your child has an **insulin pump**, you can use the special bolus settings to change their insulin dosing. Talk with your doctor or nurse on how best to do this.

Planning is always the best strategy for successful blood sugar management. Work with your child to come up with a **plan for food choices, exercise, and insulin dosing**. All three are important. It can be difficult to make quick decisions when Aunt Ethel and Uncle Joe are watching what you're doing. Anticipating possible challenges and having this plan with your child sets you up for a great family gathering.

The most important thing is for you and your child to enjoy yourselves. The holiday season is about family and making memories. Counting carbs can be challenging during special occasions but do your best. No one is perfect. Getting up to check blood sugars in the middle of the night during holidays is always a good idea. Don't hesitate to contact the on-call doctor with any questions or concerns.



Planning for Sick Days

By Kelly Cutillo, RN, CDE and Eileen Galvin, RN, CDE

When your child with Type 1 Diabetes is sick, managing blood sugars can become more challenging. Common illnesses like the cold and flu (and some medicines used to treat these illnesses) can cause blood sugars to rise. More insulin may be needed to control blood sugars and prevent ketones from forming. Ketones form when the body uses fat instead of glucose for energy. Ketones are acidic and can lead to stomach aches, vomiting, dehydration or a life-threatening problem called diabetic ketoacidosis (DKA). If your child is nauseous, unable to eat, and/or vomiting, they are still at risk for ketones and low blood sugars!

Some guidelines to help you manage sick days

Never stop taking insulin, even if your child is not eating well. Continue to give the usual amount of long acting or basal insulin. Drink plenty of fluids to prevent dehydration and ketoacidosis. Rule of thumb: use small sips and drink ½ cup every hour

Supplies to keep in stock

- Drinks with and without sugar
- Sports drinks
- Jell-O
- Popsicles
- Broth based soups
- Saltines
- Applesauce
- Bananas
- Toast
- Graham crackers
- Ketone meter and strips
- Glucagon
- Fever reducing medicine such as Ibuprofen (Advil) or acetaminophen (Tylenol)

What should my child eat or drink?

Encourage your child to drink fluids. Depending on their blood sugar, they may need to drink liquids with sugar. Use the chart below as a guide. If your child is not eating solid foods, they should drink broth or bouillon to make sure they are getting enough salt.

If your child can't keep down clear liquids, call the Pediatric Endocrine Unit at 617-726-2909 and page the on call doctor.

If your child's blood sugars are:	Have your child drink:
99 mg/dL or lower	Liquids with sugar
100-200 mg/dL	A mix of liquids with sugar and sugar-free liquids.
201mg/dL or higher	Drink sugar-free liquids

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How should I manage my child's insulin?

Sick children need basal insulin even if their blood sugars are low. Basal insulin is the pump basal, glargine (Lantus® or Basaglar®), detemir (Levemir®), or degludec (Tresiba® or NPH). While you should continue to give some basal insulin while your child is sick, the dose may need to be changed. Use the chart below as a guide.

If your child uses an insulin pump and has ketones, change the pump site. Give the correction insulin by injection.

If your child has:	Treatment:
Blood sugar levels under 70-80 mg/dL	Treat low blood sugar with simple sugars (juice, syrup) and recheck blood sugar in 15 minutes.
Blood sugar levels between 80 mg/dL and 250mg/dL AND can eat and drink normally	Give your child the usual amount of insulin.
Blood sugar levels of any level AND has either urine ketones that are small, moderate or large OR blood ketones that are 0.6 or more	Call 617-726-2909 – page resource nurse or the on call doctor for advice on insulin dosing

Prevention is important!

Get your flu shot! People with Type 1 Diabetes are at risk for developing serious complications from the flu. The best way to protect against flu is to get a flu shot every year. And never underestimate the importance of good hand washing!

You are not alone! If you have any questions or concerns, please call! We are here for you!

Managing Diabetes with Winter Sports

By Shannon Maguire Lessard, RN and Diana Uhrich, CPNP, CDE

Exercising and participating in outdoor activities in winter can be fun and safe as long as you keep your diabetes under control.

Winter sports can be quite rigorous and the body may need to use more energy to stay warm when it is cold. This change in the body's metabolism combined with strenuous exercise can affect blood sugar levels. With the tips on the next page, there's nothing stopping you from racing down the slopes, scoring a game winning goal, or making the perfect snowman this winter.

If you have questions about how to manage your diabetes while active in the cold, talk to your diabetes doctor or nurse educators. They can help decide if an insulin adjustment or temporary pump setting may be helpful with the increased activity.



Bella Clark

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Tips for being active in cold weather

Check blood sugar levels more often than usual.

Whether using a continuous glucose monitor (CGM) or fingerstick, you should check your blood sugar every hour. Activity and excitement may increase the blood sugar levels at first, but then may be lower when the activity is done. Checking your blood sugar more often can help you see how the activity is affecting blood sugar levels.

Have a backup plan. Extreme cold, poor weather conditions, and geography may disrupt phone, Bluetooth, or Wi-Fi service. This may impact continuous glucose monitor or phone signal. The cold can also affect how well the blood glucose monitor works. Store an extra set of supplies at room temperature and keep an open line of communication with friends and family to ensure easy, safe blood sugar checks.

Keep your insulin someplace where it won't freeze.

To keep from freezing, insulin should be stored at temperatures above 36 degrees Fahrenheit. Storing it indoors or inside an insulated container works well.

If you wear an insulin pump, keep the pump and tubing as close to your skin as possible. There should be no more than one layer of clothing

between the pump and your skin.

If insulin freezes, throw it out right away and replace with new insulin. **Don't** use insulin if it has frozen and thawed. In very cold weather, keep a back-up insulin supply readily available in case this should happen.

Bring snacks with you. Protein bars with at least 25 grams of carbohydrate or other carbohydrate and protein snacks may help prevent low blood sugar. Keep fast acting carbohydrates that are less likely to freeze—such as glucose tablets, glucose gels, and Life Savers—with you as well.

Bring extra supplies with you. The best place to keep extra diabetes supplies is where they will not freeze. On a mountain this may be at the lodge. When close to home, you may need to leave some supplies at home. If it is too cold for you to carry your supplies with you, let your family or friends know where you will be and where the supplies are.

Wear a Medic alert. Wearing a MedicAlert lets other people know what medical conditions you or your family member have in the event of an emergency.

Making Travel Simple with a Child with Type 1 Diabetes

By Leah Berthold, RN, CDE

- **Bring lots of diabetes supplies.** Always bring 2 to 3 times the amount you think you need. Divide the supplies up between two people so one person isn't carrying everything.
- **Carry things to treat low blood sugars.** Pack your child's favorite treatment for lows blood sugars. Pick items that do not melt, never go bad and bring your child's blood sugar up quickly. Skittles are a good option.
- **Bring a letter from your Endocrinologist stating your child has Type 1 Diabetes.** The letter should also say what medicines (glucagon, insulin), supplies (ketone strips, blood sugar testing strips, lancets), and equipment (pumps, CGMS, meters) are needed.

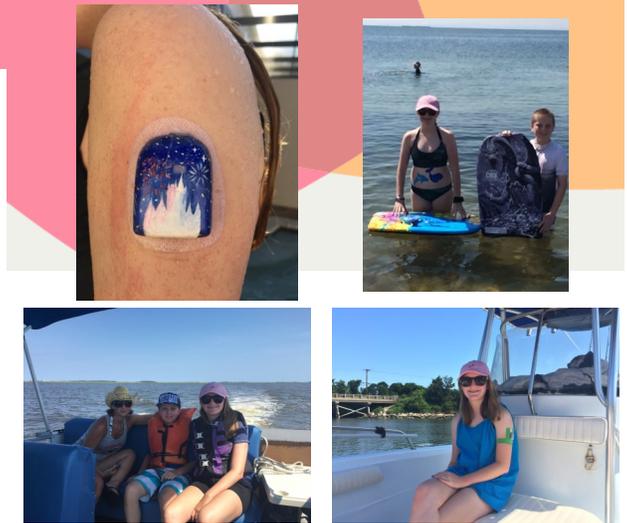


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- **Wear a MedicAlert.** Even if your child does not wear one typically, it's important to wear one when traveling. Have them pick out a MedicAlert necklace or bracelet they like
- **Remember your child's insulin doses may change.** Excitement, sun, cold weather and activity all impact your child's diabetes. Check with your diabetes educator or doctor about the best plan of action.
- **Have fun!!** Your child's diabetes might not be in perfect control during your travel, but traveling is a time to relax and enjoy time with family and friends away from home. Make memories and enjoy every minute.

For more information, visit: massgeneral.org/children/diabetes/diabetes-travel-tips.aspx



Sugar Cone Cornucopia Shell

Amended from hostthetoast.com

Prep time: 10 minutes

Kitchen Tools:

Microwave

Wooden spoon handle (or chopstick)

Small bowl

Paper plate

Ingredients:

1 box of 12 sugar cones

Warm water

Filling of your choice such as fresh fruit, veggies and dip or pudding

Directions:

Wash your hands with soap and water. Gather all your kitchen tools and ingredients and put them on the counter.

Fill a small bowl with warm water. Take one sugar cone and dip the pointed end in the water for 20 seconds.

Place the cone on a paper plate and microwave for 15 seconds, or until the end is soft and easily shaped.

Curl the end of the sugar cone around the handle of a wooden spoon or a chopstick and hold it there for 30 seconds to help the shape set. **Be careful, it will be hot.**

Set the cone aside to let it dry and continue with the remaining cones.

Remember to count the carbs of whatever you put inside!



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