Type 1 Diabetes

RIDE Rhode Island Department of Education

Early Detection Can Protect Your Child's Health and Save Their Life

Type 1 diabetes (T1D) is a chronic health condition that can lead to severe illness, and even death, if it is not diagnosed and managed. People with T1D can live long healthy lives if they are diagnosed early and get the medications and care they need.

T1D affects your body's ability to make insulin. Normally when you eat, your body breaks down the carbohydrates in your food into glucose (blood sugar). Insulin is needed to help you absorb glucose for use as energy. In T1D, your immune system destroys the part of the body that makes insulin. Without insulin, your blood glucose can increase to dangerous levels. When this happens, you can become very sick.

What parents and guardians can do:

- Learn about diabetes symptoms
- Ask your child's doctor or healthcare professional about risk factors for T1D and if your child should be screened for diabetes.
- Risk factors for T1D are not as clear as for prediabetes and type 2 diabetes but known risk factors include:
  - **Family history:** Having a parent, brother, or sister with type 1 diabetes.
  - **Age:** You can get T1D at any age, but it usually develops in children, teens, or young adults.
- **Call your child's doctor immediately if they have symptoms** (see below).
- **If a doctor diagnoses your child with diabetes:**
  - Make a treatment plan with your child's doctor or care team. Share important information from this plan with your child's school nurse, all caregivers, coaches, activity instructors, camp director, other doctors, etc.
  - Your child may be referred to see another healthcare specialist for further examination, such as an "endocrinologist".

Early Screening

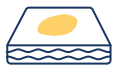
Ask your child's doctor if your child should be screened for T1D. Your child can be diagnosed with T1D before having any symptoms or getting sick. A healthcare professional can test their blood for antibodies. If they have diabetes, getting care early can help prevent sickness.

Symptoms of T1D

Contact a doctor or healthcare professional if you have any of these concerns for your child:

Being more thirsty than usual

Peeing more than usual



Starting to wet the bed after potty training

Being more tired than usual

Blurry vision

Losing weight quickly without a known reason

When should children with diabetes go to the Emergency Room?

Diabetic ketoacidosis, or "DKA", is a potentially life-threatening complication. Sometimes, DKA is the FIRST SIGN of diabetes in people who have not yet been diagnosed. Signs and symptoms include:

• Confusion • Breath that smells fruity • Trouble breathing • Severe belly pain • Nausea, vomiting

If your child displays or reports symptoms of DKA, contact your doctor immediately, or bring your child to the nearest Emergency Room!

Resources

Rhode Island Department of Health: www.health.ri.gov/diabetes/for/parents

U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention | About Type 1 Diabetes for Parents: www.cdc.gov/diabetes/about

CDC | 3 Ways to Help Manage Your Child's Type 1 Diabetes: www.cdc.gov/diabetes/caring/3-ways-help-manage-childs-type-1.html

Effective January 1, 2025 and as required by law, the Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE) maintains this information on its website for each school district, charter school, and mayoral academy to make accessible to the parent or guardian of every student when the student is first enrolled in elementary school. Source: https://webserver.rilegislature.gov/BillText/BillText24/HouseText24/H7613.pdf