Transitioning to Independence

A Guide for Young Adults with T1D

Table of Contents

Foundations	Healthy Habits	Page 2
	Managing Relationships	Page 9
Heading Off to College	Preparing for College	Page 12
	College Accommodations	Page 15
	Studying Abroad	Page 20
Entering the Workforce	Human Resources / First Hired Conversations & Accommodations	Page 25

Healthy Habits

Introduction

Establishing a routine and healthy habits is important for all young adults, but especially those with type 1 diabetes (T1D). A healthy lifestyle lays a strong foundation for success and properly managing your T1D!

Establishing Adult Care

Why do I need to transition to an adult endocrinologist?

- Pediatric endocrinologists are experts regarding type 1 diabetes in children, however they may be less familiar with managing T1D throughout adulthood. The transition from your pediatric endocrinologist to an adult endocrinologist can be tricky, and young adults going through this transition may experience more glycemic variability as well as other mental health concerns. It is normal to feel overwhelmed by this transition.

Transitioning vs. Transfer to Adult Care

- Transitioning to adult care refers to the preparation to move from a pediatric provider to an adult provider.
- Transfer to adult care is when you begin seeing an adult provider.
- Transitioning to adult care is a process that takes time, and it is best to start planning for this transition during early adolescence but should begin at least one year before transfer to adult care.

What does transitioning involve?

- Transitioning involves a gradual shift of diabetes management responsibilities from parents/guardians to the adolescent/young adult.
- Seeking treatment for psychosocial or mental health challenges that may affect this transition (reference this guide for additional information).
- Ask your doctor to send a medical summary to your adult endocrinologist. Here's an example of information your new doctor will want to receive.
- A referral to an adult endocrinologist by your pediatric endocrinologist.

Transitioning Tips

- Before you transition to an adult endocrinologist, practice taking charge of your endocrinology appointments. For example, you could come prepared with a list of questions you would like your doctor to answer, and when your doctor asks how things are going, try responding before your parent or guardian responds! See more tips here for effective communication with doctors.
- Try to begin the transition process as early as possible. For example, in early adolescence, parents/guardians can gradually begin transitioning diabetes management tasks to the adolescent. At least one year before transferring to adult care, ask your pediatric endocrinologist for an adult endocrinologist referral to ensure no gaps in your care.
- If possible, transfer to an adult primary care provider before you transfer to an adult endocrinologist. It's best not to transfer to two new doctors at the same time!

Meal Planning

Guiding Principles

- Keep a regular meal routine to prevent overindulgence and subsequent blood sugar lows and spikes.
- Healthy meal plans include non-starchy vegetables, few added sugars, and refined grains (white bread, rice, and pasta with <2g / serving).
- Whole foods are better than processed foods.
- Eating protein helps improve blood sugar and increase satiety (less hunger).
- Fiber is broken down slowly and prevents blood sugar spikes.
- It is best to consume less sugar and simple carbs.
- To help achieve a balanced meal using the 'Plate Method' as well as proper portion sizes. Get diabetes meal planning tips from the CDC.

Easy Snack Ideas

Eat snacks with proteins, healthy fats, and 10 to 15 grams of carbohydrates to help your blood sugar stay near the target range.

10-gram carbohydrate snacks:

- 4 sliced strawberries with 3/4 cup cottage cheese
- 4 animal crackers with 1 string cheese stick
- 3 turkey roll-ups (slice of turkey wrapped around a pickle spear, slice of avocado, and slice of tomato)
- 2 ants on a log (3-inch slice celery with 1/2 tablespoon peanut butter and 3 to 4 raisins)

- 1 rice cake with 1 tablespoon peanut butter
- 2 ounces hummus with celery
- 2/3 cup shelled edamame
- 1 slice low carbohydrate bread toasted with 1 hard-boiled egg

15-gram carbohydrate snacks:

- 1/2 apple with 2 tablespoons peanut butter
- 1/2 cup fresh fruit with 1/2 cup cottage cheese
- 4 animal crackers with 4 ounces milk
- 1/2 sandwich (turkey, chicken, tuna, or peanut butter) on whole-wheat bread
- 1 tortilla (6-inch) wrap sandwich (turkey, chicken, tuna, or peanut butter)
- 1 waffle with 1 tablespoon peanut butter
- 3 graham cracker squares with 1 tablespoon peanut butter
- 3 tablespoons hummus and 6 Triscuit crackers

What do you wish you knew about meal planning that you know now?

"I was initially hesitant to start meal prepping, as I was under the impression that I would have to eat the same bland, flavorless meal every day in order to maintain my blood sugars and reach my goals in the gym. This is the exact opposite of the truth; there are a myriad of cookbooks, recipes, social media accounts, you name it, that have healthy, delicious meals and snacks that won't have a detrimental effect on your blood sugar. Even if you plan on making the same meals every week or so, this is more than enough variety to give your meals some spice and keep you satisfied. Don't be afraid to experiment either! There are so many diabetic-friendly, celiac-friendly, whatever-friendly ingredients, meals, and snacks out there that it would take a small army to sample them all. Find what fits you best! Everyone is different, and that's what makes figuring out what works for YOU so fun. I have also found that the more you eat a meal, the better you are at dosing in a way that minimizes your during-meal hyperglycemia or after-meal hypoglycemia. This is an amazing feeling and a small victory that always leaves me feeling refreshed and satisfied." – Cameron C.

Sources / Additional Resources

- JDRF: Food and Diet Guide
- CDC: Weekly Meal Planner
- CDC: Meal Prep to Better Manage Your Diabetes
- My Diabetes: Easy to Follow Diabetes Management Diet
- Diabetes Strong: 7-Day Diabetes Meal Plan (with Printable Grocery List)
- Medical News Today: What is a Type 1 Diabetes Diet?

- Jet Fuel Meals: Meal Plans for Athletes with Diabetes

Mental Health

Guiding Principles

- Living with T1D can be very stressful and lead to feelings of burnout, anxiety, and depression – but you're not alone!
- Building resilience is an important tool in stress management.
- Psychologists, social workers, and other clinicians can help equip you to deal with the everyday challenges of living with T1D.
- Consider joining activities that facilitate connection within your local T1D community.
- Yoga is a great way to help to reduce stress and lower your blood sugar in addition to improving your flexibility, strength, and balance.
- T1D can change your relationship with food or how you view mealtimes, so it's important to seek help if you find that you're experiencing anxiety around meals and snacking.
- It's important to know when to ask for help – click here for tips on finding a mental health professional!

What do you wish you knew about mental health and T1D that you know now?

"After being diagnosed with T1D at age 24, I thought life was over. So much information was being thrown at me all at once, and it was very overwhelming. My mental health was at the lowest it had ever been. What helped my mental health as well as my anxiety is educating myself in a way that allowed me to understand what's happening in my body. I also wanted to be part of a community, and if anyone ever had a question about T1D I wanted to be able to help answer it for them and offer my support. I got involved in my local T1D community and take every opportunity to educate others. I also make time every day to do something for myself that makes me happy – whether big or small, I always make sure I do something that makes me smile. Sometimes it's food related, and other times it's just sitting outside and enjoying nature. One day it's watching my favorite show or movie, and other days it's going for a walk or to the gym. Whatever it is, it's important to do something for yourself and allow yourself to appreciate it. Although we have T1D, it doesn't stop us from doing the same things as everyone else – we're just part of an exclusive club where we all get to be VIPs." – Elijah O.

Sources / Additional Resources

- JDRF: Mental Health Guide
- JDRF: Type 1 Diabetes and Eating Disorders
- CDC: Diabetes and Mental Health
- American Diabetes Association: Mental Health

Exercising

Guiding Principles

- Set realistic goals and don't try to do too much too quickly.
- Consult a doctor or Certified Diabetes Care and Education Specialist (CDCES) about adjusting insulin levels around your exercise routine and keep them updated on any changes to your fitness regimen.
- Exercise can result in decreased insulin requirement so be sure to appropriately adjust insulin based on exercise routine.
- Pumps and other diabetes-related technologies may have 'exercise' settings, which could help prevent hypoglycemic episodes.
- Strive to get approximately 30 minutes of aerobic exercise several days a week.
- Drink plenty of water and eat a meal 2 to 4 hours before exercising.
- Check blood glucose before exercising, keep snacks on hand during a workout, and be sure to eat afterward to prevent hypoglycemia.
- Continue to check blood glucose after exercising, as levels can be affected for up to 24 hours.
- The relationship between exercise and glycemic control varies – find what works for you and stick to a routine.
- Precautions: Reduce insulin, increase carb intake, and adjust workouts as necessary.

How Does Exercise Affect T1D?

- During exercise, fats and glycogen are used to make energy.
- Exercise minimizes your chances of developing complications and can help you reach your A1c goals and lower your blood pressure and daily insulin requirements.
- Type of exercise, insulin on board (IOB), temperature, humidity, hydration levels, and time of day can affect how blood sugars react to exercise.
- Strenuous activity can contribute to hypoglycemia.
- Resistance training can help improve diabetes management.
- Adding high intensity interval training (HIIT) or sprints to aerobic workouts can minimize the drop in your blood sugar, and doing resistance activities before an aerobic workout can help steady blood sugar.
- Swimming is an ideal exercise for those with diabetic peripheral neuropathy, as it is easy on the joints but still increases heart rate.
- Cycling allows for varied workout intensity; however, it is a good idea to bike with carbohydrates, fluids, and diabetic supplies handy while biking.

Sources / Additional Resources

- JDRF: Exercise and T1D
- Beyond Type 1: Start Working Out with T1D
- T1D Exchange: 5 Habits That Help Me Thrive with Type 1 Diabetes
- UCLA Health: Type 1 Diabetes Exercise Guidelines
- Health Central: Type 1 Diabetes and Exercise
- Healthline: Exercising with Type 1 Diabetes

Drinking Responsibly

Guiding Principles

- Drinking alcohol in excess increases the risk of hypoglycemia.
- It's best to avoid drinking large amounts of alcohol in one session.
- Make sure you always have some carbohydrates to eat before you drink.
- It's recommended that you don't include the carbohydrate content of alcohol in your carb-counting calculations. You should aim to eat some carbohydrates every few hours as you continue to drink.
- Be sure to stay adequately hydrated by drinking plenty of water.
- Test your blood glucose levels before you go to bed and if your level is normal to low, eat a snack before you head to sleep.
- Be very cautious about lows the night after drinking, have a low snack prepared for a sudden drop in glucose levels while sleeping.
- Closely monitor your blood sugar the next day as alcohol can cause you to go low hours after consumption.

Sources / Additional Resources

- JDRF: What You Need to Know About Type 1 Diabetes and Alcohol
- JDRF: Alcohol and Type 1 Diabetes: How to Manage A Night Out and the Morning After
- American Diabetes Association: Alcohol and Diabetes

What do you wish you knew about healthy habits and T1D when you were experiencing this transition that you know now?

- Don’t beat yourself up over days where blood sugar levels aren’t perfect. There are so many factors that affect blood glucose levels, including hormones.
- Try to work out consistently and at a similar time each day.
- Meal prepping will help you and it does not have to be boring!
- Starting / keeping a routine will be your best friend.
- If you’re going to drink, make sure you eat something (and dose for what you eat), and know that different types of alcohol will affect both you and your blood sugar differently.
- Therapy is for everyone!

Managing Relationships

Introduction

Managing relationships while also managing type 1 diabetes (T1D), whether in college, at work, or in your personal life, can add an extra layer of challenges. Open communication and understanding are required to strike a balance between T1D management and professional, academic, and personal responsibilities. Here are some resources to help guide conversations in various settings.

Personal Relationships

Roommates

Having a conversation with your roommates about type 1 diabetes is crucial as it can impact your well-being, safety, and relationship while you live together. Some things to talk about include:

- What type 1 diabetes is and what you do to manage it
- Ways they may need to help you, including:
    - How to use a glucagon pen/nasal spray
    - Where your snacks are if blood sugar is low
- How blood sugars can impact your mood
- Your pump and CGM alarms, especially if you live in a shared room, as it could wake up both of you in the middle of the night
- Additional resources:
    - Dear Roommate: I am letting you and a few other people around me know that I have type 1 diabetes (juvenile diabetes).
    - Type 1 diabetes and college: How to tell your roommate(s) about T1D | Edgepark HealthInsights

Friends

Just like your roommates, talking to your friends about T1D is important in order to create a safe and supportive environment outside of the workplace and classroom.

- Tell your friends about your T1D, explaining what it is, and how you manage it.

- Your friends should know that it's important to get help if they notice problems like symptoms of extremely low blood sugar. If you're comfortable, show your friends your pump, pens, and/or CGM and explain how they work and how you use them.
- Let your friends know where you keep your snacks for low blood sugar (juice, glucose tabs, candy) so that they can quickly retrieve them for you if needed.
- Be cautious about drinking if you plan to do so with friends. Be open with your friends about the effects of alcohol on type 1 diabetes so they are aware. For your own knowledge, plan ahead for situations that involve drinking and get good at using technology to watch your trends and learn how to manage them.
- Provide your roommates or friends with your parent's/guardian's phone numbers/contact information in case of emergency.

Family

Balancing your independence and need for support from your family will require conversations and discussion with your family.

- Set boundaries with your family. Discuss when you would like to talk about diabetes.
- Determine if your family is allowed to text/call you whenever you have a CGM alert.
- Provide your family with your roommate's or friends' phone number/contact information in case of emergency.

Romantic Relationships

Healthy diabetes management should be an open and constant part of your and your partner's life.

- **Compromise**
  Relationships, in general, require give-and-take. Develop a strategy for how to deal with times where your T1D may need to take priority over the relationship, and the need for flexibility and understanding when these times occur.
- **Communication**
  Through open communication channels and productive conversations with each other you will be able to find your rhythm and get used to managing your type 1 diabetes together. Communicating the impact of your blood sugars (i.e., low blood sugars) to your partner can be helpful. For example, if you get short-tempered when you experience a low, your partner will better understand how to support you.
- Additional Resources: https://www.jdrf.org/t1d-resources/living-with-t1d/relationships/t1d-and-commited-relationships/

College Relationships

Professors and Academic Administration

Engaging in open communication with your professors about your type 1 diabetes is important to establish a supportive learning environment and to address any potential accommodations that may be needed.

- **Get in contact with the university's Disability Services office**
  Develop a plan that ensures you can take care of your diabetes during class, tests, etc. with no penalty.
- **Selective disclosure with your professors**
  You can decide to share or not share your disability specifics. This is something that you can determine based on relationship/understanding of the professor. Let professors know if you have any accommodations as soon as you receive the approval from your university's Disability Services.
- **Communicate your needs**
  In college, you have to stand up for yourself. It is important to communicate your needs in the classroom setting so your type 1 diabetes does not impact your learning experience.
- Additional resources at The Professor's Guide to Type 1 Diabetes.

Workplace Relationships

Boss / Direct Report
Making sure that you are transparent with the person (or people) who supervise you is important in a workplace environment, and that is especially true when it comes to talking about T1D. You need to ensure people know what to expect if you are having a T1D-related issue.

Explicitly set expectations as to what happens when you have a T1D-related issue that requires you to step away from your job temporarily.

- Additional resources: https://beyondtype1.org/employers-guide-type-1/

Coworkers
It can also be helpful to explain to coworkers that you have T1D and what that means when working together.

- Additional resources: https://beyondtype1.org/diabetes-work-self-advocacy-tips/

Clients
While clients do not need to know about your T1D, it can be important to let them know about the possibility of there being an issue when working on a project for them. This can be something as simple as setting a backup contact for time-sensitive matters or negotiating a larger time frame at the beginning of a project.

Preparing for College

Introduction

Headed off to college and feeling overwhelmed with next steps? Don't worry – we've a created a checklist to help you prepare!

Please note that this list is not exhaustive but is intended to serve as a starting point as you begin making preparations for college.

Campus & Housing

- Apply for housing accommodations, and keep in mind the following:
  - Where is the nearest bathroom in relation to my room?
  - Does the dorm have air conditioning?
  - Can I bring an additional refrigerator to store my medication?
- Apply for dining hall accommodations (as needed).
- Tell your roommates that your insulin must remain in the refrigerator, and they cannot eat your low snacks.
- Bring an ice pack for insulin.
- Bring extra storage for medical supplies.
- Meet your RA / HD and tell them about T1D and how to help during a severe low.
- Display a list of your emergency contacts (physicians, parents, close friends).
- Connect with campus police / safety personnel to help prepare for any instance of low blood sugar.
- Learn how mail is sent to your dorm if you receive medical supplies through the mail.

The Essentials

- Locate a pharmacy close to campus.
  - Do they accept your current insurance plan?
- Make sure you have your insurance card.
- Pack 30 / 90 days of supplies, including:
  - Infusion sets
  - CGM
  - Charging cords
  - Batteries

    - Test strips
    - Lancet
    - Meter
    - Back-up insulin method
    - Ketone testing strips
- Learn how to order your own supplies if you are unfamiliar with this process.
- Consider wearing a medical alert bracelet, or keychain on your bag.
- Locate a nearby endocrinologist.
- Purchase a first aid kit.
- Prepare for a sick day! Have a care package with pajamas, a change of clothes, and extra diabetes supplies in case of illness.

Academics

- Work with the Accommodations Office or Disability Services to request any accommodations you feel you need, including:
    - Extended exam time / rescheduling
    - Ability to take food into exams
    - Meal plan flexibility
    - (See a full list in the College Accommodations section)
- If comfortable doing so, email your professors prior to class (depending on your school's policy) to inform them you have T1D.
- Keep extra low snacks and glucagon with you at all times.
- Familiarize yourself with the campus and learn where your classes are located and determine how far you will need to walk before classes begin.

Having Fun

- Eat before leaving your dorm.
- Share your glucose levels with a trusted friend.
- Educate a friend on how they can help you in the event of a severe low.
- Bring juice and other snacks in the event of a low blood sugar – do not assume others will have food readily available.
- If applicable, put your insulin pump in activity mode or set a lower temporary basal rate to reduce the amount of insulin you receive.
- Stay hydrated and eat food if consuming alcohol (and be sure to first learn about the impact alcohol has on your body!).
- Be very cautious about lows the night after drinking, have a low snack prepared for a sudden drop in glucose levels while sleeping.

- Closely monitor your blood sugar the next day as alcohol can cause you to go low hours after consumption.

Sources / Additional Resources

- JDRF: A Quick Start Guide to Living Independently with Type 1 Diabetes
- Beyond Type 1: College / University with Type 1 Diabetes
- Beyond Type 1: Test Taking with Type 1 Diabetes in College / University
- Beyond Type 1: How to Navigate the Dining Hall with Type 1 Diabetes
- JDRF: Alcohol and Type 1 Diabetes - How to Manage A Night Out and the Morning After

College Accommodations

Introduction

College is an exciting journey filled with new experiences and challenges. For students with T1D, this journey can present unique obstacles.

Navigating accommodations for diabetes in college is a multi-faceted journey that requires proactive communication, self-advocacy, and awareness of college-specific policies. By starting early, utilizing available resources, and maintaining clear and respectful communication, you can ensure that your college experience is conducive to your academic success and overall well-being.

It is important to remember that accommodations are not one-size fits-all and should be tailored to your specific needs.

Common Accommodations for People with Type 1 Diabetes

1. **Eating during class, tests, or labs**: This ensures you can manage your blood sugar levels effectively without compromising your academic performance.
2. **Having medications on hand**: Access to necessary medications and supplies during class and exams is crucial in case of a diabetes-related emergency.
3. **Not having to take tests until blood glucose is stable**: Some students with diabetes may require accommodations that permit them to delay tests until their blood glucose levels are within a stable and safe range. This accommodation, often called “breaks as needed,” recognizes that high or low blood sugar levels can significantly affect cognitive function and concentration, making it difficult to perform well in exams when levels are not in control.
4. **Having extra time to complete tests**: Another valuable accommodation is receiving extra time to complete tests. Diabetes-related fatigue, cognitive challenges, or the need to check blood glucose levels and administer insulin during an exam may require additional time.
5. **Being able to take breaks during class**: If you have low or high blood sugar or need to manage something diabetes-related, you should be able to step out of class to fix this.
6. **Flexibility with tardiness**: Diabetes management can sometimes lead to unexpected delays, such as low or high blood sugar episodes that require immediate attention.

7. **Registering for classes early**: This ensures that you can choose class times that align with your diabetes management routine. For instance, you can avoid scheduling classes during times when you typically experience blood sugar fluctuations or medical appointments.
8. **Extensions on assignments**: Diabetes management can be time-consuming and unpredictable. Therefore, there is the option of receiving extensions on assignments in case you encounter diabetes-related challenges that impact your ability to meet deadlines.
9. **Priority registration for housing**: This allows you to get more accommodations, such as single dorms, a bathroom in the dorm, air conditioning, or a refrigerator in the dorm.
10. **Special meal plan**: You may be able to request flexibility or additional meals or points on your meal plan to ensure access to food on campus anytime.
11. **Handicapped parking**: This can prevent you from walking across campus, especially if you have high or low blood sugar.
12. **Finding support**: You can ask if there are any current people with diabetes on campus who would be willing to meet with you.

Step-by-Step Guide to Receiving Accommodations

1. **Contact your college's disability office**
   Initiating contact with your college's disability office is often the first step in securing accommodations. Each institution has its own processes and requirements, so it's crucial to reach out early. Start the process as soon as possible, preferably before the semester or quarter begins, to allow ample time for assessment and implementation.

Sample letter or email to request college accommodations:

Hi,

I hope you are having a nice day! My name is X, and I am an incoming first-year needing accommodations. I have type 1 diabetes, so my pancreas doesn't work as well as it should. I've had type 1 diabetes since I was X years old, so I'm pretty good at managing this.

Because of this, I need several academic accommodations:

1. *I need the equipment necessary to test and treat my blood glucose levels, at all times. These supplies include a blood glucose monitor, test strips, continuous glucose monitor,*

lancets, insulin, insulin pump or insulin syringes, needles, and a Glucagon Emergency Kit.

2. *If my blood sugar goes out of range or I need to troubleshoot my medical devices, I will need to take breaks during classes or assessments and might require extra time to complete the task at hand.*
3. *My phone is used as a receiver for my continuous glucose monitor and must remain within the classroom and within 10 feet of my body to effectively capture my blood glucose level.*
4. *In high school, I received 50% extended time on exams.*
5. *I also need water, food, and insulin equipment in the room with me.*

Please let me know if you have any questions about this, and I have attached my doctor's note here. I am super excited for school to start!

Sincerely,
Name, phone number, and email

2. **Have your documentation ready**
   Many colleges may require documentation from a healthcare provider to verify your need for accommodations. This may include a doctor's note outlining your specific requirements. Reach out to your doctor and let them know which accommodations are most appropriate.

   If you have a 504 plan from high school, it can serve as a valuable reference point for the accommodations you might need in college. However, be prepared to adapt and modify it to suit your current needs.

3. **Review the accommodations letter**
   After contacting the disability office, you will collaborate to make an accommodations letter. This may entail a meeting with an advisor, completing a form, or just providing a doctor's note.

Sample accommodations letter:

I am writing to confirm that X, a student enrolled in your course this quarter, is registered with the Office of Accessible Education. We have on file documentation of X's disabilities. Based upon review of X's functional limitations, I am stating that the following academic accommodations are appropriate and necessary:

- *50% additional time on any timed assessment (e.g., quizzes, exams) that is 24 hours or less.*
- *Exam breaks, as needed. Student's need for breaks has been factored into their additional exam time.*
- *Exam time window restriction: exams should end no later than 8 P.M.*
- *Reschedule exam in case of time conflict with another class or exam.*
- *Permission to bring food, water, medication, and/or medical device(s) into exam room and use as needed.*
- *Ability to take breaks during class, as needed.*
- *Student needs iPhone present at all times, including exams, for medical monitoring*

Accommodations are determined on an individualized basis. Your input as the instructor is important in the process, as academic modifications should in no way compromise the essential elements of the course. Please contact me by phone or by e-mail if you have concerns about the accommodations stated above as they apply to your specific course. If you believe that the accommodations stated above need to be modified because they may fundamentally alter your course, or if you have any questions about the implementation of these accommodations, please contact me as soon as you can so that we can resolve your concerns before we get too far into the quarter.

4. **Email your professors**
   Effective communication with your professors is crucial for the successful implementation of accommodations. Don't hesitate to reach out to them early in the semester to discuss your needs.

Sample letter or email to professors:

Hi,

I hope you're having a nice day!

I just wanted to let you know about my accommodations letter that I just received today. I have type 1 diabetes, so my pancreas doesn't work as well as it should. I've had type 1 diabetes since I was X years old, and I'm pretty good at managing this. During class or exams, I may need to change medical equipment, monitor and manage my blood sugar from my phone, or eat sugar to bring my blood sugar back up. During exams, I have 50% extra time, where I can take breaks to manage my diabetes as needed. Please let me know if you have any questions, and I'm happy to talk to you about this during office hours sometime this week, if that's helpful.

Thanks!

Name, phone number, and email

Enforcing College Accommodations

- In the event that a professor is hesitant to approve your accommodations, please know that you have options. Inform the college's disability office promptly, as they can provide guidance and facilitate discussions with the professor. Some professors may not be familiar with diabetes-related accommodations. Be prepared to educate them about your needs and provide resources from reputable sources, like those mentioned below.
- Advocating for yourself is a critical skill. Clearly communicate your needs and assert your rights when necessary. Be persistent in ensuring your accommodations are honored.
- Keep records of your interactions with the college disability office, professors, and any diabetes-related incidents. This documentation can be invaluable if challenges arise.
- The process of securing accommodations can be stressful. Seeking support from friends and family can help you cope with this stress.

Sources / Additional Resources

- JDRF: Going to College with Type 1 Diabetes
- T1D Toolkit: College Standardized Testing
- Children's Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP): Managing Diabetes in College
- Milk and Honey Nutrition: Navigating College with Diabetes
- BestColleges.com: Guide on Testing Accommodations
- Edutopia: Helping Students with Disabilities Understand Accommodations in College
- The Diabetes Link: Off to College Student Guide

Studying Abroad

Introduction

International studies are an increasing part of the collegiate experience, and with a bit of extra planning, you can rest assured that living and studying abroad are achievable as a T1D student.

Preparing for Living Abroad

Living and traveling abroad for long periods of time can be stressful, especially if you're living with type 1 diabetes. Here is a list of things to consider and prepare before you leave for your trip!

1. Update your prescriptions. Many insurance companies will allow you to get extra supplies ahead of time if you are going to be out of the country for an extended period of time. Ensure you have extra insulin, long-acting insulin pens, and even a backup pump!
2. Find a local doctor's office and hospital ahead of time.
3. Have a printed list of your contacts, including parents, endocrinologist, and pharmacy.
4. Request a travel letter from your endocrinologist that states you have T1D and the necessity of your supplies. Pack it with your medical supplies.
    - Sample Travel Letter from a Physician
5. Confer with your study abroad program to see if you need any special accommodations or forms (homestay, refrigerator access, doctor's note on your condition, extra baggage allowance, etc.).
6. Make sure you have an emergency plan in place.
    - Confirm what your international options are with your health insurance and opt into international health insurance as needed.
    - Consider special travel health insurance such as MedJet, etc.
7. Ensure that your program supervisor and a few of your peers are aware of your T1D and what to do in case of an emergency.
8. Look up diabetes necessities in primary languages spoken in country(ies) where you plan to be:
    - Type 1 diabetes
    - Low / high blood sugar
    - Insulin
    - Use Google Translate if it's not in a language you speak

9. Make sure you have an international data plan (or a data plan in your country), or prepare if you'll only have offline data.
10. Consider food abroad, including carb counting and different nutrition labels.

What to Pack

Whether you're traveling for 6 days or 6 months, packing when living with T1D can be overwhelming! Make sure to pack 2-3 times the amount of supplies you need in your carry-on bag. Here is a packing list to get you started:

- Insulin
- Test strips
- Loaner pump / CGM
- Medical alert tags
- Medical alert bracelet
- Extra batteries for pump/meter (or a battery pack if rechargeable)
- Charger for pump / meter
- Backup receiver for Dexcom / Omnipod /Libre / etc.
- Insertion sets
- Reservoirs
- Long-acting insulin pens (for emergency)
- Syringes (for emergency)
- CGM sensors
- Ketone strips
- Low snacks (glucose tabs, fruit snacks, etc.)
- Glucagon
- Doctor letter
- Medical equipment letter
- Adhesive stickers (Skin Grip, Grif Grips, etc)
- Travel insurance
- Ice pack for insulin

Travel Accommodations

You're finally ready to go abroad, but airport protocol and living in a new place can be confusing and difficult. Here are some helpful accommodations and tips to make your life easier:

1. **Make sure to carry everything with you**

a. Not only do you have to worry about dangerous temperatures in the cargo hold where your checked baggage goes, but you need to ensure everything makes it to your destination! AirTags or Tiles in your carry-on luggage are helpful in case your bag gets lost or stolen.

2. **TSA**
    a. **Notify the Officers**
        i. When you arrive at the Security checkpoint, let TSA officers know about your medical device and any other equipment prior to screening. If you have an insulin pump, glucose monitor, or other medical device attached to your body, inform the officers where it is located before the screening process begins.
        ii. Although not required, you can give the TSA officer a travel card prior to screening to discreetly mention your diabetes. Here is an example: TSA Travel Card
    b. **Screening Process**
        i. If you do not wish to go through screening by technology, inform the TSA officer and they will conduct a pat-down. Pat-downs are conducted by a TSA officer of the same gender, and you may request private screening at any time.
        ii. You will not be required to remove any medical devices attached to your body.
        iii. In the event that your insulin pump or glucose monitor is attached to your body, the device is subject to additional screening, including visual inspection. You may be required to conduct a self-pat-down of the actual device, followed by a test of your hands for any trace of explosives.
    c. **Insulin Pumps and Security**
        i. Each insulin pump and CGM has different protocols when going through airport security. Make sure to check your pump and/or CGM manufacturer's website for specific instructions regarding your pump.
            1. Medtronic Diabetes
            2. Tandem Diabetes
            3. Omnipod
            4. Dexcom
    d. **Insulin Cooler packs and TSA**
        i. When going through TSA, you can have ice packs but they have to be mostly frozen. Learn more here.
    e. **Still Have questions?**
        i. Contact TSA Cares: TSA offers screening information and assistance to travelers upon request through TSA Cares at (855) 787-2227.

3. **Letters for Airports (supplies/snacks/ice packs/pumps)**
    a. It's best to get this note from your doctor, because it will show that you have an official diagnosis of type 1 diabetes. A letter from your doctor carries authority if your medical needs are called into question. This is not to say that a note from you will not work. You may not even have to present a note when you travel, but it's helpful to have one just in case.
    Sample Travel Letter from a Physician

4. **Fridges in house/dorm/hotel**
    a. Request in advance to ensure your insulin stays safe and viable.
5. **Homestay Accommodations**
    a. Notify your host family of what to do in an emergency.
    b. Make sure your host family knows where low blood sugar glucose/snacks are.
6. **Emergency Medical Contact**
    a. Include this in your doctor's note and bring it with you for plane/air travel.
    b. Also leave it with your host family and your program's director.
7. **Extra bag (limit 2 suitcases - get an extra for a carry-on bag)**
    a. You are allowed to have an extra carry-on bag for "medical supplies" **in addition** to your 2 allotted carry-ons (for most major airlines). Most airlines can't charge you for a 3rd bag and they can't question it. In order to qualify as a medical bag, the bag must be only for medical supplies rather than a mix of medical and personal supplies.
        i. Medical Bags do not count toward the personal item bag allotment.
            1. See Delta's Policy and American Airlines Policy
        ii. RyanAir allows a medical bag onboard free of charge but requires a doctor letter in advance in order for the medical baggage waiver.
8. **Storing Insulin**
    a. Insulin Cooler Pen - goes over the pen and is FDA registered
    b. Insulin Vial Protector - not a cooler, but good for protection, especially for younger kids
    c. Insulin Vial Cooler Pack Case - comes with 2 cooler packs and holds 2 vials of insulin
    d. Insulin Cooler Pack Case - comes in a few sizes - doesn't require any refrigeration, just submerge in water to activate!
    e. Rechargeable Insulin Cooler - up to 30 hours of refrigeration

What do you wish you knew about this when you were experiencing this transition that you know now?

- "You can still do anything with diabetes, even if it takes extra planning." - Berkeley B.

- “Pack more supplies than you think you need (especially insulin). Plan for how to get supplies abroad in an emergency.” - Evan S.
- “Get insulin cooler packs!! When going through TSA, you can have ice packs but they have to be mostly frozen. When I was flying back, I ended up going to a pharmacy and getting medical ice packs from them to use to get home since I didn’t have access to a freezer.” - Lexi W.
- “Make sure you take low snacks and emergency supplies like a spare pump site change and/or extra insulin when you go out. Walking more and eating different foods will affect how your blood sugar reacts.” - Elizabeth L.

Sources / Additional Resources

- JDRF: Travel
- IES Abroad: Let's talk about Type 1 Diabetes and Studying Abroad
- Beyond Type 1: How We Sent Our Son with Type 1 Diabetes 6,000 Miles Away
- The Diabetes Link: Off to College with Diabetes

Human Resources / First Hired Conversations & Accommodations

Introduction

Transitioning into the workplace can be a scary and challenging time. Whether you are working while in school, transitioning post-graduation, or any time in between there are unique challenges, but T1D doesn't have to complicate that transition.

Legal Workplace Rights for People Living with Type 1 Diabetes

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) protects employees with disabilities in the workplace. If you have a disability, the ADA provides protection from job discrimination based on your disability. Type 1 diabetes is considered a disability under the ADA.

Regardless of ADA protection, an employee must satisfy employer requirements for the job (i.e. education, employment experience, skills, licenses). The employee must also be able to perform essential functions of the jobs with or without reasonable accommodations.

Common protections in the workplace include:

- Employers cannot fail to hire or promote you because of your diabetes.
- Employers cannot terminate you because of your diabetes (unless you pose a "direct threat").
- Employers must provide you with reasonable accommodations that help you perform the essential functions of your job.
- Employers must not discriminate with regard to employer-provided health insurance.
- Learn more about workplace rights from the American Diabetes Association.

Reasonable Accommodations

Reasonable accommodations are changes or adjustments made to a work environment or job that will allow a qualified employee with a disability to perform the essential functions of the job. Reasonable accommodations should create an equal and accessible workplace for those with disabilities.

Reasonable accommodations should not have a financial consequence for you and these accommodations should be provided at no cost to you.

Common examples of reasonable accommodations in the workplace include:

- Additional breaks
- Resting area
- Private place to test blood glucose or administer insulin
- Ability to keep supplies and food nearby
- Modified work schedule
- Access to technology (e.g. smartphone for CGM readings)
- Unpaid leaves of absence

Be Your Own Advocate

You are your own biggest advocate - no one else knows more than you do about your body. Advocating for yourself in the workplace is important to ensure your health is a priority and you are safe. Don't be afraid to stand up for yourself -- ask for any accommodations you may need, educate those around you, and take care of yourself!

Handling T1D Emergencies in the Workplace

Emergencies can happen in the workplace, such as a high or low blood sugar. Often these come without warning and at the least convenient of times. Having a plan and being as prepared as possible can help prevent panic in the moment.

For example, choose a place in your workspace where you keep low supplies. Choose a fast-acting glucose source that works best for you and keep a stash of it in this area. Make sure this area is a place that is readily accessible to you and/or someone else in the event you send someone to get something for you. Regularly check your low supplies to ensure that you always have them when you need them.

Spreading awareness for T1D in your workplace will allow your managers and coworkers to be there to support you. If they don't know, the situation could easily be overlooked.

Emergency rescue meds, such as glucagon, should always be with you as well. It is a good idea to keep this in the same area you've chosen for other emergency supplies. Make sure someone else knows where this medication is and how to use it.

Sources / Additional Resources

JDRF: Talking to Others About Your Type 1 Diabetes
Beyond Type 1: Tips for Managing T1D in the Workplace
Beyond Type 1: How to Handle Low Blood Sugar Emergencies at Work
Harvard Business Review: How to Manage Your Diabetes in the Workplace

The Transitioning to Independence Guide is for informational purposes only and should not be used in place of medical advice from a professional healthcare provider. This content was compiled by members of JDRF's Advocates in Action Council (AAC), a group of young adults who actively support the advancement of JDRF's advocacy priority areas and spread awareness of type 1 diabetes within their communities.