

# A Guide to Diabetes in the School Setting



School Health Services

# IDEA - Public Law 94-142

## Student Rights

- Free and appropriate public education.
- Least restrictive environment.
- Eligible students receive services to meet their individual needs (IEP).
- Diabetes classified as “Other Health Impairment”.

# Rehabilitation Act - Section 504

- Protects persons with disabilities from being excluded from participation in any program or activity receiving federal funding.
- A 504 plan may be written to specifically state the accommodations necessary to meet the student's needs at school.

# House Bill TCA 49-5-415

- For a school that has a student with diabetes:
  - TCA Bill allows the school to train a staff volunteer, unlicensed staff (UAP), in the care of the diabetic at school, in the absence of the school nurse or parent.
  - The school nurse is responsible for the care of the diabetic student in the absence of the parent.
  - At least one school employee should be designated (who is NOT a healthcare professional) to serve as Unlicensed Assistant (UAP).
  - The LEA registered nurse must provide training to the UAP.

# House Bill TCA 49-5-11 (cont.)

- This training to the UAP includes:
  - Hyperglycemia and hypoglycemia symptoms and treatment
  - Blood glucose and ketone testing
  - Glucose gel, glucagon, and glucagon administration in an emergency
  - Management of the student's diabetes according to the Individualized Healthcare Plan (IHP)

# What is Diabetes?

- Diabetes is a serious , chronic disease that impairs the way the body uses food.
- Insulin, a hormone produced by the pancreas, helps the body convert food into energy.
- In diabetes, the pancreas does not make insulin or the body cannot use the insulin properly.

# What is Diabetes?

- This can cause the blood sugar level to be too high or too low.
- Diabetes cannot be cured, only managed.
- Diabetics must carefully balance food, medications and activity levels to keep the blood sugar level as close to normal as possible.



# Types of Diabetes

## Type I

- Pancreas does not produce insulin
- Must receive insulin through injections or a pump
- Most common type afflicting school-age children

## Type II

- Insulin is not used properly in the body
- May be able to control the disease with diet and exercise
- May require oral medications and/or injections
- Obesity is a high risk factor



# Diabetic Management at School



- The student may have to visit the nurse at scheduled times for blood testing and/or insulin injections, or urine testing
- It is the responsibility of the teacher, student, and nurse to ensure testing and/or medications are administered on time
- Special arrangements should be made in the event of field trips or class parties to ensure that a parent or nurse accompanies the student

# Diabetic Management at School

- It may be necessary for a diabetic student to eat a snack in the classroom to maintain adequate blood sugar levels.
- Depending on maturity, & MD orders, blood sugar testing may be performed without nurse assistance.
- Insulin is generally administered in the clinic.
- Some students have insulin pumps which automatically administer calculated amounts of insulin.

# Diabetic Management at School

- The student may need special scheduling for lunch.
- The student may require quick acting sugar to be available at all times.
- The student may require free access to water, and may carry a water bottle.
- The student will require free access to the restroom.

# HYPOglycemia

## (Low Blood Sugar)

**Caused when the  
body gets too  
much insulin, too  
little food, a  
delayed meal, or  
more exercise than  
usual**

Symptoms include:

- Light-headedness
- Irritability
- Confusion Inability to follow directions
- Sleeping in class
- Headache
- Hunger
- Shakiness/Fainting

# HYPERglycemia (High Blood Sugar)

- Occurs when the body gets too little insulin, too much food, or too little exercise
  - May also be caused by stress or an illness

Symptoms include:

- Excessive thirst
- Frequent urination/trips to the restroom
- Blurry vision
- Fast heart rate, rapid breathing
- Nausea/Vomiting

# Treatment of Symptoms

- Always allow a student with symptoms to go to the nurse immediately.
- Never allow a student with symptoms to go to the clinic by him/herself.
- Only staff members who are trained in diabetes management should treat a symptomatic student.
- Hypoglycemia will be treated with glucose tablets/gel, juice, snacks, or soda according to the student's IHP.
- Hyperglycemia will be treated with insulin administered by a nurse or parent/guardian.



# Emergency Care

- Hypoglycemia and hyperglycemia can both be potentially life-threatening and must be treated immediately.
- 9-1-1 and trained staff members should be contacted immediately.
- Hypoglycemia may cause unconsciousness or seizures and may be treated with Glucagon administered by the nurse or by trained school personnel .

# Your Student With Diabetes

- Will have an IHP, specific to his/her diabetes management.
- Will have specific instructions for emergency care management.
- Will have specific equipment/supplies/snacks.





# What YOU need to do

- Check with your school nurse to obtain specific information (IHP) about students with Diabetes under your instruction or supervision.
- Attend training provided by your school nurse about each individual diabetic student in your class.
- Read the handout “A Guide to Diabetes in the School”.
- Inform your school nurse at least 2 weeks prior to any off-campus trips or activities

# What YOU need to do

- Clip the handout to your grade/attendance book for your substitute's reference.
- Please ask for any clarification about Diabetes and the management of a diabetic student from your school nurse.
- Thank you for your participation in learning about the care of students with diabetes.

# You Need to KNOW

- A student should not be tested after an episode of severe high or low blood sugar.
- The student may not be able to make the best judgement call (eg. eat glucose tabs) when they have low, or high blood glucose.
- You are important to the care of the diabetic students at school---BE AWARE!

# QUESTIONS

- Ask the school nurse to train, refresh your training or answer any questions or concerns that you may have.
- Thank you for helping to care for our students.