

High School Issues

Information for Young People

Heading to High School

High school is different from primary school in many ways and when you have diabetes there are a few extra things you need to think about.

- High schools are usually a lot bigger in size than primary schools so it takes a lot longer to get around. You are constantly on the move, usually the classes are held in different buildings. You may find that you end up on the other side of the campus away from your bag or locker. So it's a good idea to carry some 'hypo' food with you just in case. Try keeping your 'hypo' food in your pencil case that way you will always have something with you.
- Once you start high school you are more likely to be travelling alone on public transport. In case of an emergency, make sure that you have some identification on you, saying that you have diabetes.

Giving Insulin at School

All schools have different policies about students keeping medication (including insulin) and blood glucose testing equipment with them at school. You need to find out what your schools policy is regarding this.

Ideally, if you are using insulin pens and taking multiple injections of insulin a day, you should keep your insulin with you at school. If you are allowed, then it's a good idea to keep your insulin pen in your pencil case along with your 'hypo' food. Try not to leave your insulin in your school bag particularly if it is left in the sun. If your insulin over heats it can go off and not work as well as it should.

Be careful with your insulin pens/needles and make sure you dispose of any sharps in a safe place. Some schools have 'sharps' containers in their sick rooms that they allow you to use. Remember to check what your school's policy is.

Blood Glucose Testing at School

You need to check your schools policy to find out if you can keep your testing equipment with you at school. It's a good idea to test your BGL at school before you give any insulin, play sport or at anytime you don't feel right. If you are allowed to keep your BG testing meter with you ensure it is kept in a safe place and don't let any of your friends play around with it. Remember to dispose of any sharps in a safe place.

Sport & Hypoglycaemia

You will probably be involved in sport of some kind at high school. It's a good idea to always test your BGL before playing sport or exercising. Someone on your team, preferably your coach, should know something about diabetes and know how to help you if you have a 'hypo'. Remember to always carry some 'hypo' food with you especially if you are down on the oval or gym.

To prevent hypo's when playing sport or exercising, do one of the following, either:

1. eat extra carbohydrate (CHO) to cover the exercise, *or*
2. reduce your dose of insulin that is working at the time of the exercise

A lot of young people exercise and play sport so they can keep in shape, so the last thing they want to do is eat a whole lot of extra CHO to avoid 'hypos'! If you are unsure of which insulin to reduce or by how much, speak to your diabetes doctor or educator.

Exams

As you move through high school exams become really important. To perform at your best you need to have a good blood glucose level. When your BGL is too high you will be thirsty, tired and want to go to the toilet a lot. When it is too low, you will have trouble concentrating. It is worth making the extra effort to try and get your BGL's under control before exam time starts.

You will need to make sure that you have access to 'hypo' food and your BG testing meter during exams. So make sure the school knows that you may have to test, eat or go to the toilet during the exam.

Special Consideration for Examinations

Each of the states in Australia have 'special provisions' for year 10 and 12 exams. This information can be found on the individual state education websites or by contacting them directly. For more information visit the education.qld.gov.au website.