

Parenting a Teen with Diabetes

DIABETES IS NOT AN
OPTION AND NEITHER
IS DIABETES
MANAGEMENT.

ADAPTED FROM:
TRIPLE P: TEENAGERS &
THE HOSPITAL FOR SICK CHILDREN

- Your teen may not be ready to manage diabetes alone.
- Diabetes management is a heavy burden to carry alone.
- Voice your frustrations at the diabetes; not your teen. For instance, "I am so frustrated with these numbers." When we say "why are you so high," it sounds judgmental.
- Tell your teen you know that they are trying. There is no danger in giving them an inflated ego.
- Positive reinforcement will often yield more desired behaviour.
- Do not threaten your teen with diabetes and complications.
- If you want your teen to take exemplary care of him/her self, then you need to role model this as well.



Three Important Facts about Diabetes in Adolescents

Adolescence is a time of rapid biological, cognitive, and emotional growth. It is also a time of significant peer conformity, experimentation, boundary-testing, and independence.

Although your teen should be more responsible; adolescence is a time when achieving adequate blood glucose control is most challenging.

Diabetes management requires a level of responsibility and behavioural control that is often difficult for many teens to do during this age and stage.



Three Important Facts about Diabetes in Adolescents

1

insulin action

During adolescence, there is an increase in two hormones: insulin-like growth factor-1 (IGF-1) and growth hormone (GH). This leads to a decrease in insulin action in the liver, fat, and muscle.

In those with diabetes, increased insulin doses are required during this period. This may cause weight gain and more variability in blood glucose control with higher A1c levels. This increase in levels of IGF-1 and GH may contribute significantly to the risk of onset and/or progression of diabetes-related complications.

Three Important Facts about Diabetes in Adolescents

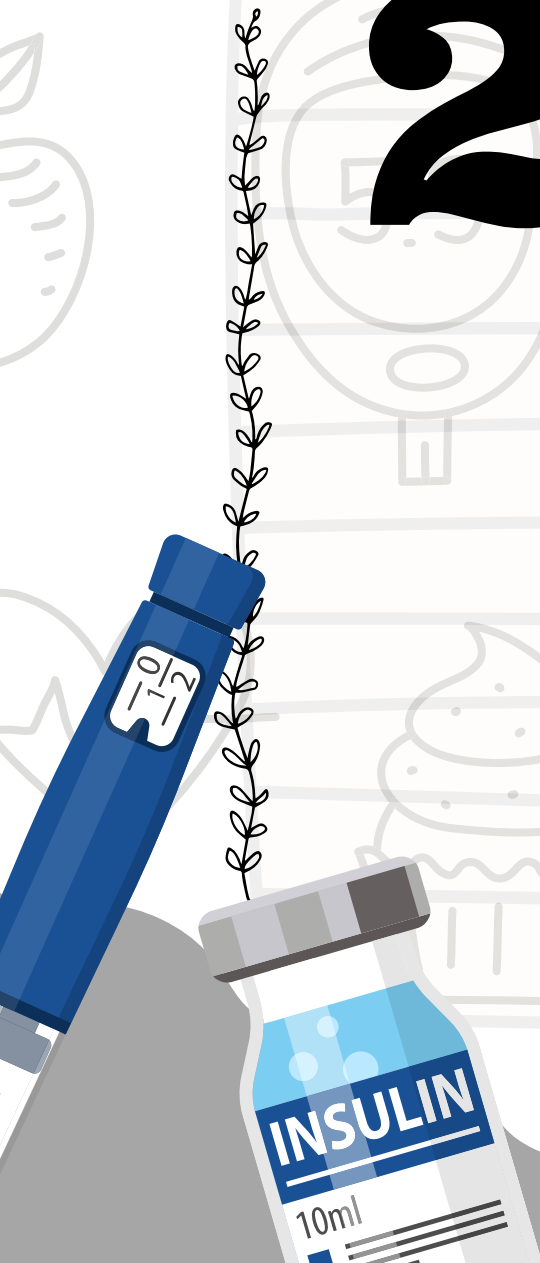
2

behaviour

During this time, teens mature from being family-oriented to being much more influenced by their peers and current trends.

Adolescence is also a time for risk-taking behaviours. Much of this relates to the teen's attempt to develop their identity.

During this time, teenagers are transforming and experiencing significant personal development. Parents must evolve in a way that supports this growth.



THREE IMPORTANT FACTS ABOUT DIABETES IN ADOLESCENTS

3 outcomes

During adolescents, it is common for A1c levels to be about 1% to 1.5% higher on average than in younger children or adults.

Research suggests, 45% of teens with diabetes may demonstrate non-compliance behaviours with routine, school, chores, and so on.



Encouraging Appropriate Behaviour

HOW TO DEVELOP A POSITIVE RELATIONSHIP WITH YOUR TEENAGER

Spend time with your teenager:

The goal is to focus on quality time; rather than quantity of time. This can be when you are alone and there is no pressure to do other things.

Talk with your teenager:

Listen to the things they are saying and show interest.

Show respect about the things they are telling you and do not use this time to tease them. The goal is for your teenage to feel comfortable with sharing and talking more openly.

Show affection:

Showing your teenager that you care about them, is one of the best ways to maintain a good relationship.

This can be done through respect and positive feedback.

Managing Problem Behaviour

IMMEDIATELY, CONSISTENCY,
AND DECISIVELY

Teenagers learn self-control when there are clear rules stating what is appropriate and when parents use consequences for problem behaviour immediately, consistently, and decisively.



Establish clear family rules:

Rules should be clear and agreeable. Rules should indicate what family members should do, rather than what they should not do. For instance, *speaking politely is better than don't be rude*.

Make clear, calm requests:

- Get your timing right: No one likes being interrupted when they are involved in something important or enjoyable. Give them advance notice where possible.
- Get close and gain their attention: Stop what you are doing and move closer to them so they can easily see and hear you. Use their name to gain their attention.
- Describe what you want them to do: Be specific and say exactly what they are supposed to do.
- Give them time to cooperate: allow enough time for them to process and complete the task.
- Praise cooperation: If your teenager cooperates with your request, praise them.
- Back up your request: If your teenager does not cooperate, do not give a second chance. This may be appropriate for children, but not for teenagers. Back up your request with a consequence. Never threaten to apply a consequence as this will teach your teenager only to respond to your requests when a threat is included.

Use directed discussion:

Even though you may have clear rules in the home, a teenager may forget them. You can use directed discussion to remind them of the rule. This may require gaining their attention, addressing the concerning behaviour of concern, asking for the rule to be stated, and then prompting the correct behaviour. For example *You are speaking too loudly. What's the rule about how to speak to each other?... OK, now let's start again and follow that rule.*

Logical consequences:

Logical consequences are best used for mild behaviour problems that do not occur that often. If your teenager does not follow a clear request, choose a consequence that fits the situation; if you can.

