

Tips for Avoiding Diabetes Burnout for Parents

Your child will have diabetes their whole life, but this does not mean it has to be their whole life (or yours!). Children’s Child Life Specialists and Endocrinology team created this list to help avoid the diabetes blues.

High and low blood sugars are inevitable and will happen.

Managing your child’s diabetes does not mean they will always have in-range blood sugars. We will never be able to perfectly do what a complex pancreas does in people without diabetes, and that is okay. Fulfilling, healthy lives are still possible! We want people with diabetes to be in range as much as they can, because that helps them to feel their best.

Avoid value judgments. Identify numbers as “in-range” and “out-of-range” instead of “good” or “bad.” This nonjudgmental approach helps foster openness and honesty about diabetes. If a child finds they will always be met with a negative reactions from you when they have an out-of-range reading, they will begin to avoid telling you about out-of-range readings. Feeling shameful about BG readings and avoiding conversations about them is helpful neither for diabetes management nor for your relationship with your child.

Educate others. Advocacy is a great way to help your child feel empowered through his or her diabetes. Invite your child to participate in teaching other caregivers, classmates, and friends about his or her diabetes in a way that is meaningful to them.

Find support that works for your family. There are online diabetes groups, kids’ play groups, teen groups, parent coffee meet-ups, research and fundraising groups, special events, day camps, weekend camps, summer camps, sports camps—the list goes on and on. For some families, finding others to connect with that understand family life with diabetes can be an incredible form of connection and support. You can help normalize your child’s experiences by allowing for opportunities to observe peers also checking their blood sugars and taking insulin. Forming connections with others with diabetes can create meaningful and understanding relationships that have the potential to support both diabetes management and emotional well-being.

Create balance. Extracurricular activities, social interactions, school experiences, and everyday life activities are important for you and your child to promote normal growth and development. Diabetes will definitely play a role in each of these but should not prevent activities or control every aspect of a person’s life. Professional athletes, surgeons, racecar drivers, climbers of Mount Everest, musicians, and all sorts of others have proved over and over again that anything is possible with diabetes. Just Google “famous people with diabetes” to get inspired!

Remember that all information is good information.

Instead of reacting positively or negatively to a number, try thinking to yourself (or aloud!), “I am glad we checked, because now we have the information we need to know what to do next.” Model this mindset for your child.



Celebrate milestones!

Acknowledge “Diabirthdays” (Diagnosis Anniversary), diabetes firsts (e.g., new injection site, trying a new product), camp or special event attendance, and so on. Diabetes management can be hard work. Give yourself and give your child credit and a pat on the back every now and then!

QUICK NUTRITION GUIDE FOR CHILDREN WITH DIABETES

Medical treatment of diabetes includes balancing diabetes medication (insulin and/or pills), food, and exercise. Eating a healthy, well-balanced diet is necessary for children to grow and develop. Foods are made up of a mixture of nutrients called carbohydrates, proteins, and fats. Foods that contain carbohydrate make the blood glucose (blood sugar) go up after eating. Carbohydrate counting is a way to balance foods eaten with medication to help keep your blood glucose levels in your target range.

PRINCIPLES OF CARBOHYDRATE (CARB) COUNTING	
3 MEALS/DAY	Aim for 3 meals daily. Avoid missing meals even when your blood sugar is high.
NO SUGARY DRINKS	Avoid all sugary beverages, including juice and soda, EXCEPT to treat low blood sugar.
RICH VS. LOW CARBS	Learn carbohydrate-rich versus low-/no-carbohydrate foods.
COUNT CARBS	Count up total grams of carbohydrate consumed and take the appropriate insulin dose.
CARB-FREE SNACKING	Include carbohydrate-free snacks throughout the day.

yummy
soup!

Quick, easy low-carb recipes

TORTILLA SOUP

- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- Kernels from 2 ears of corn
- 2 zucchini, chopped
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin or cajun spice blend
- 4 cups vegetable stock
- 2 cups chopped tomatoes, canned or fresh
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 2 ounces tortilla chips or strips of corn tortillas

DIRECTIONS

1. In a medium soup pot, heat the oil. Add corn and zucchini and sauté for 2-3 minutes over high heat. Add the cumin or spice blend and cook an additional minute to toast the spices.
2. Add the remaining ingredients, topping with the tortilla chips just before serving. Simmer the soup for 5-10 minutes and serve.

Variations: Add your favorite vegetables or leftover chicken to make a hearty soup. Add a roasted red or poblano peppers, grated cheese, and cilantro leaves for garnish.

Serves 6.
21 grams carbohydrate per serving.



OVEN FRIED CHICKEN STRIPS

- 1 cup crushed cornflakes or Panko
- ¼ cup finely grated Parmesan or cheddar cheese
- 1 teaspoon paprika
- ½ teaspoon garlic powder
- ¼ teaspoon ground thyme
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- 3 pounds boneless, skinless strips of chicken
- ¼ cup buttermilk

DIRECTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 400°F. Spray or brush a large baking sheet with vegetable oil.
2. Combine first 6 ingredients in a plastic bag. Shake to mix well.
3. Dip chicken into buttermilk, place in the bag, and shake to coat.
4. Place chicken on the baking sheet. Bake for 45 minutes or until juices run clear.

Serving suggestion: Serve with salad or vegetables and brown rice. Ranch dressing dip optional. Use leftovers for sandwiches or as part of a snack.

Serves 8.
5 grams carbohydrate per serving.

RANCH DRESSING

- 1 cup buttermilk
- 1 cup light mayonnaise
- ¼ cup finely chopped green onion
- ¼ teaspoon cayenne pepper
- 1 small clove of garlic, pressed or minced
- ½ teaspoon celery seed
- Salt and pepper to taste

DIRECTIONS

1. In a small mixing bowl, whisk together the buttermilk, mayonnaise, green onion, cayenne pepper, garlic, and celery seed. Season to taste with salt and pepper.
2. Allow to stand for at least 20 minutes, or make a day ahead for best flavor.

Makes 2 cups.
Serving size: 2 tablespoons.
1 gram carbohydrate per serving.



Some carbohydrate-RICH foods

- Starchy grains: bread, cereal, rice, pasta
- Starchy vegetables: beans, potatoes, corn, green peas, winter squash
- Milk and yogurt
- Fruit: fresh, frozen, canned, and dried
- Desserts and sweets

Some NON-/LOW-carbohydrate foods

- Meats, cheeses, eggs
- Nut butter, nuts, seeds, olives, avocado
- Non-starchy vegetables (crispy, watery)
- Sugar-free beverages: diet, Crystal Light
- Fats: salad dressing, butter, cream cheese

