

We support, empower and campaign for all Victorians affected by diabetes.



The National Diabetes Services Scheme is an initiative of the Australian Government administered with the assistance of Diabetes Australia. The NDSS Agent in Victoria is Diabetes Victoria.

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This brochure was originally developed in collaboration with a group of young people with type 1 diabetes in 2006. We thank them for their ideas, humour and inspiration.

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*I can eat sugar and chocolate (sometimes)*

A person with type 1 should eat the same as what all Australians should eat. Include vegetables, legumes, wholegrain cereals, rice, pasta, fruits, low-fat dairy products and lean meat. Like everyone else I can eat foods like chips, ice cream, chocolate and biscuits sometimes, but not every day.

**I can look after myself**

(most of the time)

Having diabetes does not usually mean that I need any special treatment or care. Most older kids and teenagers check their own blood glucose levels and give their own insulin injections. If I have a 'hypo' though, I might need help getting something to eat if I can't manage it myself.

**Diabetes is a lifelong condition that requires constant attention**

To manage my diabetes I need to have insulin every day and check my glucose levels often. I need to balance insulin with what I eat and with exercise. I always need to be prepared for a **hypo**.

**There is no cure for type 1 diabetes yet**

But there is lots of research looking at the causes and prevention of type 1 diabetes. Researchers in Australia are studying environmental factors that could be causing type 1 diabetes. They are also trialling medications to prevent its onset.



**Type 2 diabetes does not turn into type 1 diabetes**

Type 1 diabetes is an autoimmune condition where the body's immune system attacks the insulin producing cells. People with type 2 diabetes may also need to use insulin as their condition progresses. This does not mean they have type 1 diabetes.

**Please don't ask me**

- Do injections hurt?
- Will your pancreas start working again?
- Can you eat chocolate?
- Are you allergic to sugar?
- Have you still got diabetes?
- Can you catch diabetes?
- Did you get diabetes because you were fat?
- Did you get diabetes from eating too many lollies?
- Will it go away?
- Should you be eating that?
- Can you test my blood sugar?

**HIGH & LOW**

type 1 diabetes: the things you need to know





diabetes/daie'bitiz/, *n.*  
Type 1 diabetes occurs when the body's immune system destroys cells in the pancreas that produce insulin. Insulin helps the body to use glucose (or sugar) from the bloodstream for energy. 10-15% of all people with diabetes have type 1. It often begins in childhood or early adulthood but can occur at any age.

⊗ I could not have prevented my diabetes

I did not get diabetes because of the foods I've eaten, my weight or because I didn't exercise enough. I got diabetes because I have a certain gene and something in the environment caused my immune system to attack its own cells that produce insulin.

### I need daily insulin

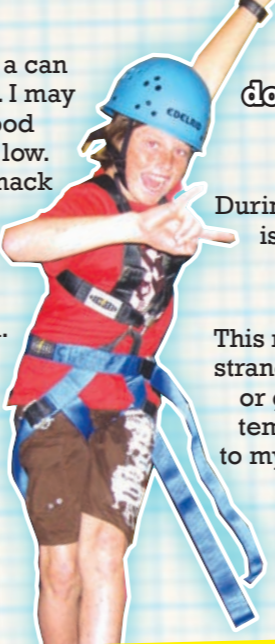
A person with type 1 diabetes does not make any of their own insulin. We cannot live without insulin so it must be injected, usually 2-4 times a day with a syringe or insulin pen, or given by an insulin pump.

### Sometimes I have a 'hypo'

Hypoglycaemia or 'hypo' is the term used when the blood glucose level is too low (less than 4.0mmol/L). This may happen if I have exercised more than normal, missed a meal or had too much insulin.

When I am 'hypo' I can get shaky, sweaty, hungry, tired, confused, have blurred vision or tingling or numb lips or mouth. When this happens I need sugar straight away to quickly increase my blood glucose level. Examples are

6 jelly beans or half a can of normal soft drink. I may need more if my blood glucose level is still low. After that I need a snack such as a piece of fruit or a sandwich to make sure my blood glucose level does not drop again. If I am unconscious do not give me anything to eat or drink. **Call an ambulance straight away on 000.**



Having a 'hypo' doesn't mean you

**GO CRAZY**

During a 'hypo' the brain is not getting enough glucose to keep working normally.

This may cause me to act strangely or be confused or grumpy, but it is just temporary. I will return to my usual self once my blood glucose rises again.

Diabetes doesn't stop me from having a normal life

People with diabetes can do most of the things that anyone else can do including sports, travel and having children.

There are AFL footballers, Olympic swimmers and mountain climbers with type 1 diabetes. I just need to remember to carry my diabetes gear, extra food and jelly beans with me.

## DIABETES FACTS.

"You can't catch diabetes"

"You can eat sugar if you have diabetes"

"You can go bungee jumping with diabetes"

"It's not only overweight or old people who get diabetes"

"You can travel with diabetes"

"You don't grow out of diabetes"

"Eating too much sugar does not give you type 1 diabetes"

