

# Top 10 Tips

## for Parents of Children Newly Diagnosed with Type 1 Diabetes (T1D)



### 1 Neither you nor your child did anything wrong

- The exact causes of T1D are not yet understood, but certain hereditary, environmental and viral factors beyond your control are thought to trigger the immune response.
- The myth that T1D is caused by eating too much sugar is NOT correct.

### 2 You will adjust to your new normal

- It will take time to adjust to your new life with T1D.
- Find friends with children that have thrived with T1D and ask for tips.
- It is important for you and your child to stay involved in the same activities as before your child was diagnosed. Make sure your child does not feel any more different from his/her peers.

### 3 Diabetes impacts the whole family

- Relationship dynamics may change after your child is diagnosed.
- Siblings may feel forgotten or like an additional burden to the family. Don't forget to ask the siblings how they are doing.
- Everyone in the family will have to adjust to portioning food, counting carbs and focusing on diabetes around meal time.
- Make sure the family takes time to work through these issues and to spend leisure time together.

### 4 Focus on the now

- Diabetes can be stressful and anxiety provoking. Do your best to take care of your child in the present.
- Work with your diabetes educator or diabetes care team to prevent short-term and long-term problems associated with low and high blood glucose.
- Don't play the blame game. Don't focus on what you could have done differently. Figure out the root cause of the highs and lows and how to prevent them next time.

### 5 Diabetes is unpredictable

- Some highs and lows are inevitable. Even with a rigid schedule and following all the doctor's orders, blood glucose changes may be unpredictable. Don't be hard on yourself.
- Flexibility is key!
- Technology is your friend, so don't be afraid to learn how to use it. Your diabetes educator can help.
- Be prepared for the lows and highs when you least expect them. Always have a backup plan.
- Be ready to readjust insulin dosing and food intake based on the situation.
- Be aware that technology may fail.

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### for Parents of Children Newly Diagnosed with Type 1 Diabetes (T1D) *continued*

#### 6 You are not alone

- Thousands of others have shared the experience of caring for a child with T1D. If they can do it, so can you!
- Diabetes camps can provide an important oasis where your child can build long-lasting friendships with others who understand what it's like to live with T1D. Camp parents can also network with others who are well-informed about diabetes technology, medical insurance coverage, local health care providers, schools and other issues.
- Peer support is powerful, but if you are not ready, that is okay.
- Your child will have a diabetes care team that should inform you about local events and support resources for your family.
- Online support communities can be wonderful resources when used properly. Be aware of who is providing the information, the source it's coming from and how it might affect your child. Always consult with your diabetes educator or diabetes care team before making changes to your care plan. Remember that every person is different and what works for one individual may or may not work for your child. Learn more at [DiabetesEducator.org/PeerSupport](https://DiabetesEducator.org/PeerSupport).

#### 10 Empower your child

- It's your child living with diabetes. Encourage them to advocate for themselves at school and in their medical care. Empower them to participate in their own care but don't expect them to take over too soon—they might not be ready yet.

#### 7 You and your child will become diabetes experts

- You and your child are the biggest experts in your child's diabetes care. You and your child know how your child's body is impacted by certain factors better than anyone else.
- Ask your child for their input about their diabetes. Include your child in self-management discussions. Let them learn to calculate insulin dosages based on glucose levels, insulin sensitivity, correction factors, carb counting, activity level, etc.
- Remember, your job as a parent is to prepare your child to take care of her/himself.

#### 8 Take care of your mental health and your child's

- Diabetes burnout is real. Seek mental health support if you have any concerns for yourself or your child. Ask your diabetes educator or diabetes care team for a referral.
- It is normal to feel stressed by diabetes and to seek mental health support

#### 9 Support your child

- Always provide support to your child even if they don't seem to want it, deep down they do.
- Stay involved in your child's care throughout. They always need your support.
- Do not blame your child for their highs and lows. Don't be accusatory (example: What did you eat?). Work through the problem and figure out solutions going forward.