

AGE-RELATED GUIDELINES FOR DIABETES RESPONSIBILITIES

Considerations

Every child is different. Age by itself does not tell you when a child is ready for more diabetes responsibility. Most children will want to do tasks that they are ready to do. It is important for them to have a sense of accomplishment by participating in their diabetes cares to the extent they are able and ready to.

The right amount of responsibility balanced with the right amount of supervision leads to the best results. Judgement-free, open communication is vital.

When giving your child more responsibility, think about:

- Your child's **understanding** of diabetes
- Your child's **interest** in having more responsibility
- Your child's **actual performance** of diabetes tasks
- Your child's overall **maturity**

What benefits will my child receive by taking on age-appropriate diabetes responsibilities?

- Develop self-confidence
- Learn his/her own limitations
- Be prepared for becoming an adult living on his/her own

Teamwork & Shared Responsibility lead to better diabetes outcomes.

Less than 5 years old

- Caregiver does most tasks
- Child's job is to cooperate

Child can:

- Learn how to help check blood sugar (insert test strip, clean finger)
- Learn to help with insulin (count to ten before taking out syringe/pen)
- Learn to recognize low blood sugar symptoms

6-11 years old

- Caregiver begins teaching child how to do more tasks
- Caregiver always supervises and is ready to step in
- It is OK for the child to ask caregiver to do any diabetes tasks (give an insulin shot)
- Caregiver can begin teaching child about long- and short-term complications

Child can:

- Start making some independent food choices
- Learning basic carb counting
- Do boluses with supervision when ready and able

12-14 years old

- Caregiver works to limit conflict, helps teen to set goals and problem-solve
- Caregiver and teens work together to fill out and review the blood sugar log
- Some teens may not be ready at this age
- Parents still supervise diabetes care

Young teens can:

- Begin doing most shots, insulin pump management, and blood sugar checks
- Count carbs and make appropriate food choices

15-18 years old

- Caregiver should continue to review the logbook, meter, or insulin pump download with teen and provide feedback in a calm and non-judgmental way
- Caregiver can "fade out" monitoring over time, but should step back in if management worsens and ask teen "What can I do to help?"
- Some teens may continue to need extra help – give them permission to ask for help

Older teens can:

- Begin doing most tasks independently
- Be increasingly responsible for communicating with the health care team
- Prepare with caregiver to transition to an adult healthcare provider

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