



# Safety Tips for Children with Diabetes

These tips can help you keep your child safe and add to general safety advice for your child's stage of development. Use this guide to help keep your child and family safe both in and outside of your home. Each home is different and no list is complete or fits every child and household. You know what is best for your child. Adapt these tips to meet the needs of your child and family. What works now may change as your child grows and develops.

## Tips for Using This Flyer:

- Share this tip sheet with grandparents, aunts, uncles, teachers and others who care for your child. Mark tips that may help them.
- Talk with your child's care team including your child's health care provider, school nurse, principal, teacher, school staff and other caregivers.
- Involve your child. Talk about the steps you'll take. Have your child help you. Ask your child "what if" questions to help them learn to problem solve.
- Be a role model. Children will do what you do. If you wear a helmet, they will too.
- Each child is different. Please talk with your child's health care provider.

## General Tips

One of the best ways to prevent injuries is to keep your child's glucose levels under control.

- Monitor your child's blood sugar as recommended by your child's health care provider. Know your child's warning signs of low or high blood sugar.
- Make sure your child is physically active.
- Test your child's blood sugar levels before, during and after any physical activity including swimming. You may need to adjust insulin when your child's activity level changes.
- Provide a balanced diet for your child.
- Check your child's skin on a routine basis for infection or areas that aren't healing. Contact your child's health care provider if you have any concerns.

## General Tips, continued

- Make sure you or your child keeps a careful record of blood sugar levels and insulin doses in a logbook. Share the logbook with your child's health care provider at each visit.
- Keep your child's glucometer in good working order and recalibrate it often.
- Have instructions for sick day management and keep them handy. Talk to your child's health care provider if you don't have a plan.
- Avoid having your child go barefoot.
- Give your child a travel pack with glucometer, juice and a snack in case of a low blood sugar reaction.
- Provide all of your child's caregivers with emergency contact information.
- Talk with adults who will be in charge about the foods your child eats as well as steps for treating low or high blood sugar when your child is at a friend's house, camp or away from home.
- Have your child wear medic alert jewelry or other form of diabetes identification.



## School Safety

- Make sure that all your child's caregivers, school staff (school bus and van drivers) and coaches are aware of your child's diabetes and have contact information to reach a parent during the day if needed.
- Complete an IHP (Individual Health Plan) with your child's school.

## Falls

Falls can be caused by feeling dizzy or decreased consciousness due to low blood sugar.

- Teach your child, family members and caregivers the signs and symptoms your child shows when he has low blood sugar.
- Be aware of these early warning signs.

## Medication Safety

To help prevent an overdose of insulin:

- Check the amount and type of insulin and then watch when your child takes medicine or insulin.
- If your child can self-inject, check your child's skill level from time to time.
- Check that any medication your child takes, whether over-the-counter or prescribed, is safe for children with diabetes.

## Choking Prevention

- Use glucose gel and avoid solid cubes of sugar or candy.
- Call 911 if you or any caregiver is unsure about what to do.

## Car Safety

- Teach your teenager to test her blood sugar before driving (at least 20 minutes before).

## Water Safety

- Test your child's blood sugar levels before, during and after any water-based exercise.
- Have your child wear a life vest in a boat, on a dock and near open water like rivers or lakes.

## Bike Safety

Also for roller blades, scooters, skateboards, skis and snowboards:

- Test your child's blood sugar levels before, during and after any exercise.
- Teach your child to take breaks to help prevent low blood sugar.
- Make sure your child always wears a helmet and other safety gear including kneepads, elbow pads and wrist guards for roller blading and skateboarding, and knee and elbow pads for scooter riding.

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- Adapted in part from the Diagnosis Related Injury Prevention Suggestions developed by the Ohio Department of Health, revised with permission by the Center for Children with Special Needs, Children's Hospital and Regional Medical Center.
- Community and Children's Hospital health care providers have reviewed this handout. However, your child's needs are unique. Before you act or rely upon this information, please talk with your child's health care provider.
- If you have comments and or suggestions please contact Andrea McCullough at (206) 987-5325 or [andrea.mccullough@seattlechildrens.org](mailto:andrea.mccullough@seattlechildrens.org). Please feel free to share this flyer with other families and providers. Children's will make this information available in alternate formats upon request. Please call Marketing Communications at (206) 987-5205.

### For More Information:

- Children's Resource Line (206) 987-2500 or (866) 987-2500, select option 4 and ask for our: Safety Checklist for the Home and First Aid Kit for the Home, or visit [www.seattlechildrens.org](http://www.seattlechildrens.org).
- Your Child's Health Care Provider
- Center for Children with Special Needs—[www.cshcn.org](http://www.cshcn.org).



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