Ten Things Teachers Should Know About Students with Type 1 Diabetes

When your student has Type 1 diabetes, the body doesn’t make the insulin needed to metabolize sugar into energy. People with type 1 have to either give injections of insulin or wear an insulin pump to survive.

Basic info: Food raises blood sugar. Exercise and activity lower blood sugar.

1. **Don’t** single me out for having diabetes. It is hard enough to have diabetes, but when I get singled out in front of others it is embarrassing.

2. **Do** recognize if I am acting odd in class and gently ask me to check my blood sugar. Please don’t assume anything about my behavior. If I am acting out of sorts, that may mean I need medical attention.

3. **Don’t** remove electronic devices from me before asking if they are related to my diabetes. If it is an insulin pump, it is attached to me and pulling it off would really hurt!

4. **Do** be understanding when I need food in class. Snacks help me make sure my blood sugar doesn’t drop too low. You could help me by allowing me to keep an emergency stash of snacks in your classroom.
5. **Don't** limit my activities based on my diabetes. If you do, people may see me as fragile, sick, or think something is wrong with me.

6. **Don't** leave me alone or send me anywhere alone if I tell you I feel low. In these moments give me a snack and let me test my blood sugar so I can better understand what is happening with my body.

7. **Do** know that sometimes it is necessary for me to use the restroom more frequently than other students. This usually means my blood sugar is high.

8. **Don't** use the word “diabetic.” This labels me. I don’t want diabetes to define me.

9. **Do** help me find ways to learn about living with diabetes while I am at school. School projects on diabetes, wellness, medicine, etc. help me learn to communicate about my condition.

10. **Do** make the effort to understand my life with diabetes. If I feel like you really care, I am more likely to do better in all areas of life. Loving support is crucial to good health and learning.

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