

# A BASIC GUIDE TO STUDENT ATHLETES WITH TYPE 1 DIABETES



**WHAT IS TYPE 1 DIABETES?** Type 1 diabetes is a medical condition which results in the body not being able to produce insulin. Insulin is the hormone that allows cells to use glucose for energy. There is no cure for diabetes; it is a lifelong medical condition.

**WHAT CAUSES TYPE 1 DIABETES?** Type 1 diabetes is thought to be caused by an autoimmune reaction (the body attacks itself by mistake). This reaction destroys the cells in the pancreas that make insulin, called beta cells. Type 1 is not caused by lifestyle, diet, or eating excessive sugar.

**HOW IS TYPE 1 DIABETES TREATED?** An athlete with type 1 either gets insulin from an insulin pump or from shots to keep blood sugars in a healthy range. Blood sugars are monitored either with a continuous glucose sensor (CGM) or by poking fingers and using a glucose meter to check sugars.

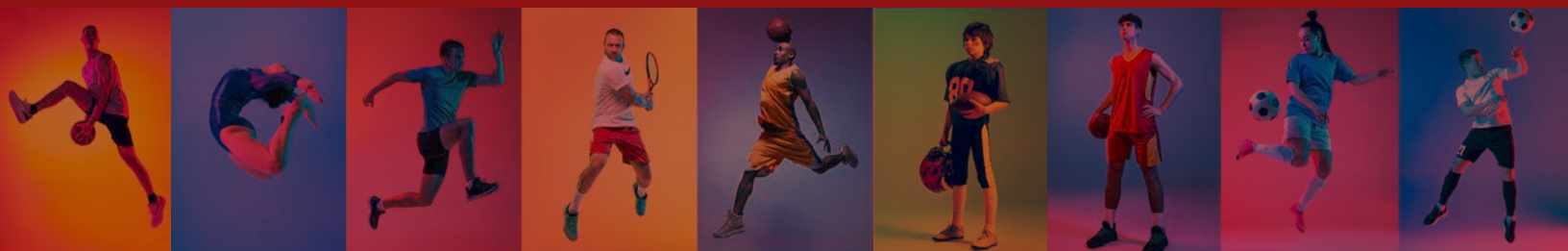
**HOW DOES TYPE 1 DIABETES AFFECT ATHLETES?** Since a person with diabetes cannot make insulin, they must give it through shots or an insulin pump. Since the amount of insulin is determined by the person and is affected by activity, food amounts, and other things like growing, an athlete can have a blood sugar that is either too high (hyperglycemia) or too low (hypoglycemia) sometimes.

**WHAT ARE THE CONCERNS WITH LOW BLOOD SUGAR?** A person with low blood sugar can become weak, disoriented, and confused. If untreated, very low blood sugar can result in a loss of consciousness and require emergency medical treatment. Low blood sugar is almost always treated by the athlete consuming glucose (sugar) by mouth rapidly, usually through a high-carbohydrate snack or beverage.

**WHAT ARE THE CONCERNS WITH HIGH BLOOD SUGAR?** If a person has high blood sugar for several hours, they can have fatigue, nausea and dehydration. If untreated, very high blood sugar can result in a condition called diabetic ketoacidosis (DKA), that requires emergency medical intervention.

**WHAT CAN I DO AS A COACH?** Type 1 athletes just want to be treated like everyone else. However, student athletes should be allowed right away to treat diabetes when requesting a break or substitution, and should be assured that treating diabetes will not impact their role on the team.

# THINGS STUDENT ATHLETES WITH TYPE 1 DIABETES WOULD WANT THEIR COACH TO KNOW



1 //

## **Athletes may have to take breaks at spontaneous times.**

If a player with Type 1 is not ready to play or asks for a substitution to eat a snack or get a drink, it is because it's necessary.

2 //

## **You can have a bad day because of diabetes.**

If an athlete is having an uncharacteristically bad game or practice, it may be tied to diabetes. An athlete may feel weak or tired (which could be a sign of low or high blood sugar).

3 //

## **We're not fooling around.**

Athletes may have to use the bathroom or take a water break, and they may feel uncomfortable about asking. Blood sugar causes the need for more urination sometimes.

4 //

## **Understanding helps. A lot.**

It is much easier for an athlete with diabetes to take care of their blood sugar when a coach is aware and understanding of a situation.