



NUTRITION FACT SHEET

DIABETES MANAGEMENT IN EDUCATION, AGED CARE & REMOTE SITES

WHAT IS DIABETES?

Diabetes is a condition where the body cannot maintain healthy levels of blood sugar. If blood sugar levels (BSL) are uncontrolled over a long period of time, this can lead to long term complications affecting vision, kidney, heart and nerve function.

HOW IS DIABETES MANAGED?

People living with diabetes can enjoy the same foods like everybody else. Maintaining regular exercise and following a balanced healthy diet for children and adults based on the Australian Dietary Guidelines, limiting saturated fats, added sugar, salt and sometimes medications including insulin can help keep BSL within target range. However, managing diabetes poses a challenge for many people across all walks of life.

The following will go through helpful tips to manage diabetes in different sectors.



EDUCATION - EARLY LEARNING

- Have an up-to-date management plan developed between the diabetes team, school and family.
- Incorporate fun and interactive activities to promote healthy eating habits.
- Lollies and chocolates are allowed however should be a treat rather than a regular snack.
- Artificially sweetened foods are not recommended as they may still affect BSL and cause stomach upset.
- For those using insulin, foods needs to have carbohydrate amounts measured, labelled and included in the management plan. Staff may need to assist during mealtimes when the child is too young to read or count.
- Snacks may be needed to be eaten between meals and during class time. Staff need to ensure meals and snacks are **fully eaten** as it can affect BSL.

EDUCATION - PRIMARY/SECONDARY

- Encourage independence and confidence by involving your child become involved in diabetes management early e.g. choosing injection sites, food choices, turning on blood glucose metres.



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- Be mindful of peer influences and social media as these may impact food choices.
- Providing guidance on carbohydrate counting and insulin management, especially during exercise and activities.
- Encouraging regular meals and snack timing.
- Drink water rather than juice and other drinks with added sugar or artificial sweeteners.
- Include low GI (glycaemic index) and high fibre foods with every meal to help improve BSL.
- Addressing any body image concerns and stress as these may affect eating habits.
- Acknowledging resident's likes and dislikes and any special dietary requirements.
- Manage any limitations that may affect eating e.g. dentures, chewing and swallowing, vision, poor appetite, mobility and dementia.
- Understanding the signs and management of hypoglycemia and dehydration.

REMOTE SITES

AGED CARE

- Special diets or restricted meals are not required as it may increase the risk of malnutrition and impact on residents quality of life.
- It is preferable to make medication changes rather than dietary restrictions to control BSL.
- Ensuring sufficient low GI foods are included on the menu to help control BSL while still offering the full menu and maximising choice.
- Remote workers often rely on buffet-style dining meals which may lead to overeating. Eat more slowly and portion control by utilising the healthy plate model: vegetables (½ plate), protein (¼ plate), carbohydrate (¼ plate).
- Include high fibre and low GI foods with meals.
- Carry a bag of lollies to every site to manage hypoglycemia.
- Stay hydrated with water due to hot and demanding work environments.
- If suitable (as per GP guidance), consider smart glucose sensors (e.g. Freestyle Libre) to quickly measure BSL by scanning phone over the arm. This avoids needing to stop work to do a finger prick test.

For more information, please visit:

Mastering diabetes in preschools and schools | Diabetes Australia

<https://www.diabetesaustralia.com.au/wp-content/uploads/mastering-diabetes-preschool.pdf>

Diabetes - Issues for children & adolescents | Better Health

<https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/conditionsandtreatments/diabetes-issues-for-children-and-teenagers>

Diabetes Management In Aged Care | NDSS

<https://www.ndss.com.au/wp-content/uploads/resources/aged-care-diabetes-management-practical-handbook.pdf>

Blood Glucose Monitoring | Diabetes Australia

<https://www.diabetesaustralia.com.au/managing-diabetes/blood-glucose-monitoring/>