



with diabetes

Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation International

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Topics in Living with Type 1 Diabetes

Financial Assistance for Supplies and Healthcare

Many families with type 1 diabetes have difficulties with insurance coverage or feel the pinch of paying out-of-pocket expenses for healthcare. The good news is there are plenty of resources available to help you with these issues. The following list identifies several of them.

Resources to help lower costs of prescription medications and supplies:

- Some drug companies offer pharmaceutical assistance programs directly to people with type 1 diabetes who have little or no insurance to help offset the cost of supplies or prescription medications. [The Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers Association](#) (800-762-4636) has information on such programs.
- [The Partnership for Prescription Assistance](#) (PPA) offers a point of access to hundreds of assistance programs that have joined together to provide savings to the uninsured. Call 1-888-477-2669 for more information.

[Click here to read more](#)

Ask a Parent

Tips for Working with Schools on 504 Plans

Q: We are meeting with my son's school on Friday to go over his health plan. The school staff hasn't come out and said that they won't do a 504 plan, but we can tell that they are resistant. Any suggestions?

A: Although we cannot provide medical or legal advice, I can certainly give you some background info on the laws that protect our children, as well as our experience with writing a 504 plan and getting it implemented.

[Click here to read more](#)

Apply for Children's Congress 2009!



JDRF is now accepting applications for its 2009 Children's Congress, which will be held in Washington, D.C., June 21-24.

To complete the application online, or to download a hardcopy to submit through the mail, please visit www.jdrf.org/ccapply.

Will It Ever Get Easier?

Q: When do the parents ever get used to having a child with type 1 diabetes? Does the frustration ever go away?

A: I have an 11-year-old daughter with diabetes who was diagnosed when she was three. I am happy to offer up some of my personal experiences and make you aware of a few resources that have helped me.

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Ask A Teen

Safe Ways to Lose Weight with Type 1 Diabetes

Q: Why is it hard for people with type 1 diabetes to lose weight?

A: I am 25 years old and have had diabetes for 23 years. While I am not a doctor and cannot offer you anything to substitute medical information, I can share with you some of the things I've learned about losing weight.

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Ask a Parent

Tips for Working with Schools on 504 Plans

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Congratulations on taking the right first step—scheduling a meeting with the school to go over how the school will help your son during the school day. This is so important to do BEFORE the school year starts. Many misunderstandings can be avoided with proper communication. Sounds like you are on the ball!

The main law that pertains to your situation is Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. According to this law, parents have the right to develop a 504 plan with their child's school. Schools can lose federal funding if they do not comply with this law. I am assuming that your son attends a public school, but if that is not the case, there are other options for working with private schools. Just to be clear—any school that receives federal funding must comply with the Section 504 law.

The hesitancy you sense might well be a lack of familiarity with how to work with a child with diabetes, rather than a reluctance to comply with the law. Certainly, you should work closely with them to put in place a workable plan. Let me tell you how we go about having our 504 plan implemented at my daughter's school. (My daughter is 11 and was diagnosed at 6.) We set up a meeting time (just as you have) and bring in the 504 plan already filled out and ready to go. I usually like to have it signed by the doctor (or diabetes educator). You can see several samples of 504 plans [here](#). I prefer to go over the plan in a friendly, but confident manner. After all, we are the ones that live with diabetes every day. I have found that most of the time when situations arise, it is because the school staff is uneducated about diabetes. I feel like that is something I can help them with (and our local JDRF chapter helps a lot too!).

Usually the school has a couple of questions for me, but there are no real problems. The 504 plan is really a win-win situation. It is a legal, written document that specifies what "reasonable" modifications and accommodations the school must provide for the student. Now, different schools have different views about what "reasonable" modifications are. That is where it becomes very important for you to specifically know what points are extremely important for you and your son. Those points may be very different for a 6-year-old that cannot test her blood sugar on her own than for a high school student participating in after school sports. That's why you get to make your own 504 that works for your son!

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If, after presenting the 504 plan to the school, they are still hesitant, I would find out why. Ask what their specific concerns are with the plan. Hopefully you will be able to work through those concerns by further educating them and easing their minds. It is always best to keep the discussion from getting heated (after all, they will be taking care of our kids), but it is imperative that your son be protected while at school. Again, assuming he attends a public school, they really don't have an option not to comply, but it is always better to not have to throw out a bunch of legalities if you don't have to!

One thing I do need to mention: Although we do have the right to draw up a 504 plan and the school must allow us to, the law is very vague about what the school MUST do. As I said before, different schools have different views of what needs to be in writing. If you find yourself unsatisfied with the school's approach to caring for your son, you should probably seek outside assistance.

Our local JDRF chapter has been a huge help to our family. Are you in contact with yours? They might be a great resource as well. Our chapter (Atlanta) has tons of support groups that are a wonderful way to get in touch with other diabetic families and find out if they are having similar issues and get advice on how to handle things. We love our support group and have met lots of great people. It sure is great to know that you aren't alone! If you are interested in getting involved, I would be happy to put you in touch with them.

The local chapters all have the School Advisory Toolkit, which is also available online at www.jdrf.org/satrequest. It is a fantastic free resource for families and contains 60+ pages of great advice. Some sample topics are: Diabetes Basics, Parent/School Partnership, Educating the Educator, Rights of Your Child, and Diabetes in the Day Care Setting and in the College Years.

Please let me know how your meeting goes. Should you have any more questions, I'll be happy to help in any way I can. Best of luck!

Ask a Parent

Will It Ever Get Easier?

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A new diagnosis of diabetes is very difficult, especially with a young child. I remember the initial frustrations and fears very well. From my personal experiences, I can tell you it does get easier but every family is on their own timetable. It is very much like a roller coaster for awhile. I remember finally feeling on top of my stresses and then when my daughter's one-year anniversary of her diagnosis rolled around, I was angry and frustrated like I never had been before. It passed quickly, as I channeled it into doing some public education and that helped me feel calm again.

I don't think you'll ever be free of frustration, however. Because kids and technology change so often, sometimes you outgrow one issue and gain others. But with each transition, you gain knowledge and experience that makes you able to handle more problems with ease. For example, at my daughter's age, her hormones are "messaging" with her numbers. But since I've dealt with other stresses before this one, I am now capable of helping her because I have had practice with other issues.

The reality of type 1 diabetes is that it requires hard work. One very important tip I can give you is to be sure to take some time out for yourself – have lunch with friends, see a movie, or go shopping. Initially, you might feel bad that you aren't with your child, but you might notice you are less frustrated if you occasionally do something not diabetes related.

What really helped our family was to hook up with other families dealing with diabetes. We joined a local support group and were able to express our frustrations to others who really understand. Much of what hurt me was that none of my family or close friends at the time understood how difficult living with diabetes was. It was refreshing to get support from people who felt the same way at some point in their lives.

Our group was sponsored by several parents but many hospitals, clinics, and schools also run them. It was wonderful for our daughter to meet other kids with diabetes and to find out she isn't alone. And it was great for us as parents to get tips and our questions answered from parents who had been dealing with the disease for longer than we had. Our daughter met a really good friend (as did I) that carried us through some of the toughest times. Check with your local JDRF chapter to see what kinds of groups are available in your area.

I hope this has been helpful to you. Good Luck!

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Ask a Teen

Safe Ways to Lose Weight with Type 1 Diabetes

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A person with diabetes and a person without diabetes share some of the same difficulties in losing weight, like having trouble maintaining the balance between exercise and consumed calories. However, there are other factors that a person with diabetes needs to take into consideration when trying to lose weight that a person without diabetes doesn't necessarily have to think about.

For people with diabetes trying to lose weight, keeping blood sugars in control is very important. Cutting back on the food you eat without adjusting your insulin doses could lead to a low blood sugar, meaning possibly eating food you hadn't planned on eating. Exercising without having a snack or decreasing your insulin could cause your blood sugar to drop too, which will mean eating another snack to bring it back up.

Adjusting your insulin dose for physical activity or changing your meal plan are areas where your doctor can help you. Everyone is different, so working directly with your doctor to figure out what works best for you would be extremely beneficial.

It also might be helpful to keep a journal of what you eat to solidify your weight loss goals and to keep yourself accountable over the course of your diet. You may forget about consuming little things like extra cream in your coffee, a few extra french fries, or having a few alcoholic (or even just non-sugar free) drinks, but if you write them down, you can see exactly what you've consumed and can make adjustments for the next day.

If you haven't had your thyroid checked recently, you may want to ask your doctor if he/she could run a test for it in addition to your hemoglobin A1c. Low thyroid function, which can be common in people with type 1 diabetes, can cause difficulty in losing weight. Other medical conditions and oral medications can also make it hard to lose weight, so I would recommend talking to your doctor if you are taking any other medications to see if there are any side effects regarding weight.

Are you currently using an insulin pump? While a pump is not for everyone, it can be a wonderful tool to help you manage your diabetes. I have been on a pump for 12 years and it has not only helped me control my blood sugars, but also has given me a lot more freedom regarding what and when I can eat. Since a pump uses short-acting insulin, I do not have to eat at specific times the way a person taking insulin injections might.

To share some personal experience, I too am looking to lose a little bit of weight. I recently got married and after the wedding I gained a few pounds. I am now being extra conscious of what I am eating and drinking. Calories really do have a way of adding up! Since I have a hard time resisting cravings, I try and keep healthy snacks in my house in place of unhealthy ones. I also try to go for a walk after work and go for a hike or play volleyball with friends on the weekends, as staying active is equally as important as watching what you eat.

I hope I have provided you with some helpful information. Above everything else, I recommend talking to your doctor. He/she can help you choose the healthiest way to lose weight and give you a great start.

Topics in Living with Type 1 Diabetes

Financial Assistance for Supplies and Healthcare

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- **The Together Rx Access** Card can offer families 25 to 40 percent off brand-name prescription medications at pharmacies nationwide. Phone: 1-800-444-4106.
- Additionally, the **National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases** (NIDDK) has a publication called “**Financial Help for Diabetes Care.**” Order print copies from the National Diabetes Information Clearinghouse: 1-800-860-8747.

Resources to help find health insurance:

- **Insure Kids Now!** is a program offered by the US Health & Human Services Department that provides information on health insurance programs for infants, children, and teens that are not otherwise insured. Phone: 1-877-KIDS-NOW.
- The Institute for Health Care Research & Policy at Georgetown University has published a “Consumer Guide for Getting and Keeping Health Insurance” for each of the 50 states. These guides are available online at <http://www.healthinsuranceinfo.net/>.

- The Health Insurance Portability Act passed by Congress in 1996 limits insurance companies from denying coverage because of a pre-existing condition. To find out more about these laws, contact your State insurance regulatory office: http://www.healthinsurancefinders.com/cr_state_department_of_insurance.html

Resources to help those who have health insurance that does not adequately cover their supplies/medication:

- **The National Conference of State Legislatures** has information about the laws surrounding health insurance coverage for diabetes in each state.
- JDRF offers tips on how to get reimbursement for continuous glucose monitors. Go to <http://www.jdrf.org/cgmcoverage>.

Have a question? Go to the JDRF Online Diabetes Support Team at www.jdrf.org/diabetessupport.