

# #Adultingwithdiabetes - 2021

## Frequently Asked Questions

### **Are there resources that can help me in preparing prepare for managing diabetes when I to go off to college or move away from home for the first time?**

There are many resources available to help with this transition. The College Diabetes Network ([www.collegediabetesnetwork.com](http://www.collegediabetesnetwork.com)) offers hand outs and information for young adults who are moving to college or entering the workforce. They can also connect you with a local CDN chapter so that you can network with other young adults affected by diabetes. Resources that may be particularly helpful are the “Off to Work with Diabetes,” “Off to College: Student Guide,” or “Off to College: Parent Guide” that are found in the [Resource Hub](#).

The [American Diabetes Association](#) also offers information about going off to college in their “[Going to College with Diabetes](#)” booklet.

### **Are there specific supplies that I should think about taking with me to my dorm or apartment?**

There are certain things that people with diabetes have found helpful to keep on hand when going to college or moving out for the first time. Some items you might consider taking with you to your dorm or apartment include:

**Low Treatment:** Consider taking some forms of glucose like glucose tabs or gel cake decorator icing that are easy to keep around and not appealing for roommates or others to eat – you want to make sure you have something available to eat if blood sugar is low. You may also want to keep some juice boxes, fruit snacks, apple sauce pouches, or other pre-packaged, easy to store foods for managing low blood sugar. It is also helpful to keep some other carb containing snacks around that are not specifically for low blood sugar treatment.

**Glucagon:** Ensure you have a form of glucagon that is not expired and store it where it is easy to find. Many people have several packages of their glucagon supplies so that they can carry one with them and keep one at home or school. Train those around you in when and how to treat a severe low blood sugar.

**Sick Day:** Think about preparing a sick day kit. This could contain fluids that contain carbohydrates (regular soda, Gatorade, broth), ketone strips, your [sick day plan](#) with [contact information for our clinic](#), insurance information, and information about how to get to the nearest emergency department.

### **If I am sharing diabetes information (CGM alerts, pump uploads) with my parents or caregivers, are there any things to think about as I move to college or out on my own?**

As you know, going off to college or moving out on your own is as much about growing up and gaining independence as it is about obtaining an education or beginning work. As you become more independent, the way you share information about diabetes with your parents or caregivers may need to change, too. Many students and parents find that continuing to share and follow CGM data is a helpful safety net when young adults are away from home. However, you may want to think about the following:

- When should a parent or caregiver contact you about your CGM information? How should they contact you?
- Are there others (roommates, friends, RAs at the dorm) that could check on you if you are not responding to calls or texts and your parents are concerned? Who are these people? Consider having your parent or other follower of CGM data store the contact information for these emergency contacts in their phone.
- What behaviors are not helpful (nagging, getting angry, etc.) and how will you avoid these around diabetes information?
- When do you want to talk about diabetes with your parent(s) or caregiver(s)? Who should bring that conversation up? How will you start the conversation?

You may also find that using the [Diabetes Medical Information Sheet](#) available in the resources section of the UW Health diabetes web page is a helpful way to keep all your diabetes information in one place.

## **How can I stay in touch with the Diabetes team if I will continue my care at American Family Children's Hospital?**

Many young adults choose to continue receiving diabetes care at American Family Children's Hospital, initially. You should speak to your diabetes provider about your plans for how to continue diabetes care. If you are in college, you may want to schedule diabetes office visits for times when you will be home for breaks or holidays. Our clinic allows you to schedule your visits up to one year in advance. Some people find that it works best to schedule their visits several months in advance so that they can get the dates and times that work best for them. You could also talk to your provider about whether a video or telehealth visit might be an option between in-person visits (note that most video visits require you to be in the state of Wisconsin or Illinois).

We also highly encourage you, if you have not already done so, to sign up for MyChart at [www.uwhealthmychart.org](http://www.uwhealthmychart.org). MyChart gives you instant online access to your medical information. Please call the MyChart Help Desk toll-free at (877) 768-0732 with any questions.

## **What are “accommodations,” and why should I register with the disability resource office at my university?**

Accommodations are reasonable changes or exceptions that ensure persons with diabetes (or other conditions that have the potential to impair performance) have the same opportunities to succeed as others. The disability resources office at your university or school can help you determine what accommodations might be appropriate for you. Some common accommodations include the ability to check and treat high or low blood sugars, have access to food or water, and delay testing or evaluations of blood sugar is outside of normal ranges.

It is important to register with your disability resources office even if you never plan to use these accommodations. Having the accommodation plan in place ensures that you are protected in case you have unplanned challenges or illness. You can request information from your school about who to contact for accommodations.

## **How should I disclose that I have diabetes to my professors/instructors, and what should I tell them?**

The disability resources office at your school may provide you with information about the process of notifying professors that you have a diagnosis of diabetes. You only need to disclose the information that you feel comfortable with, or what the professor needs to know for you to succeed in the class.

Generally, students find that providing this information as early as possible is helpful. You may find that you can speak with the professor after the first-class session or set up a time to speak with them. Our student panelists have indicated that this is a great way to connect with professors and begin to build relationships that may be beneficial in the future.

## **Are there ever times that diabetes might keep me from taking an exam at the scheduled time? If so, how should I handle that situation?**

If your blood sugars are too high or too low, you have an illness, or you have a last-minute technology failure you may need to reschedule an exam or other important event. Having the appropriate accommodations in place allows you this option. Your disability resources office will provide information about how to handle these situations at your school. It is often helpful to reach out to the professor as soon as possible to begin discussions about how to handle the missed session or test.

## **How should I make sure I have enough diabetes supplies when I am away from home?**

Planning is key. As you prepare to be away from home, start talking to your parents about how your supplies are obtained. Plan for who will order and pay for the supplies, how you will make sure they are reordered on time, and where they will be shipped. If shipping to your dorm or other address, investigate where the delivery will be made and how you can make sure the package arrives safely. Always make a backup plan.

One thing many students find helpful is having prescriptions available for pick up at a pharmacy close to where they are staying or setting up supplies for automatic shipment through a mail order pharmacy. Contact your pharmacy if you are unsure how to request a refill.

If you are on an insulin pump, consider keeping a backup of long-acting insulin and syringes or pen needles for injection so that you can give insulin in case of emergency or pump malfunction.

## **What should I consider about sharing information about diabetes with new friends, roommates, or acquaintances at school?**

Think about who you will need to share information with, and what information they will need. It can be helpful to talk about what type 1 diabetes is, what might happen if your blood sugar is high or low, how the person could help you, and what isn't helpful. Use your own style to deliver the information and do it with confidence. This is your information to share when you want to, but it is important for those around you to know how to help in an emergency.

One of the most important things to share with roommates or friends is where you keep glucagon for use in case of an emergency, and how to use the glucagon if needed. You can learn more about the glucagon from our [handout](#). The handout has links to training materials that may help you educate others.

## **I am thinking about studying abroad. What should I consider?**

As soon as you know where you might be studying abroad start doing research. You can reach out to our clinic for help.

Thinking about how to stay healthy while abroad is a top priority. We recommend reaching out to your insurance company to determine where you could seek care and what your coverage will be like while you are away. You may also find that researching needed vaccines at the [cdc.gov](http://cdc.gov) website is helpful.

Planning for how long you will be gone, what supplies you will need, and how you will obtain them is key. Some students have found that they can request an exception from their insurance to allow them to obtain a larger quantity of diabetes medications and supplies if they will be out of the country for several months. Others have arranged to have friends or family visit to replenish supplies (and enjoy the area!). Generally, we recommend that you obtain your insulin and diabetes supplies from within the United States as there may be other forms or strengths of insulins offered at pharmacies abroad.

## Should I disclose that I have diabetes during an interview for a job?

There are legal protections in place to ensure that your employment status cannot be influenced because you live with a diagnosis of diabetes, however, there are still reports of people being discriminated against for their diabetes. You should not feel like you must hide your diabetes diagnosis, but your choices about when and with whom to share this information should be thoughtful and informed. An employer may **not** ask questions about your medical condition before making a job offer. If you voluntarily disclose that you have diabetes, the employer can ask whether you will need accommodations to perform the required job duties, if they reasonably believe it applies to the job.

## Once I am hired, should I tell my employer and coworkers that I have diabetes?

There are pros and cons to disclosing that you have diabetes your employer. The CDN provides a helpful chart that is adapted here.

### Potential Pros

- Letting your employer know you have diabetes can open yourself up to resources
- You may not feel that you have to keep a “secret”
- It can improve your safety in the event of a severe low or illness
- By disclosing, you can access accommodations you may need to be more successful in your job

### Potential Cons

- Potentially negative or offensive reactions from others about your diabetes
- Potential for discrimination
- May feel self-conscious due to extra attention
- Coworkers may ask you lots of questions (“can you eat that? Are you OK?”) that may or may not be welcomed by you

For additional information about preparing to enter the workforce, please consult “Off to Work with Diabetes,” found in the [Resource Hub](#) of the CDN.