

Type 1 Diabetes and Daily Living

Occupational Therapy Strategies to Support Safety,
Participation, and Self-Advocacy

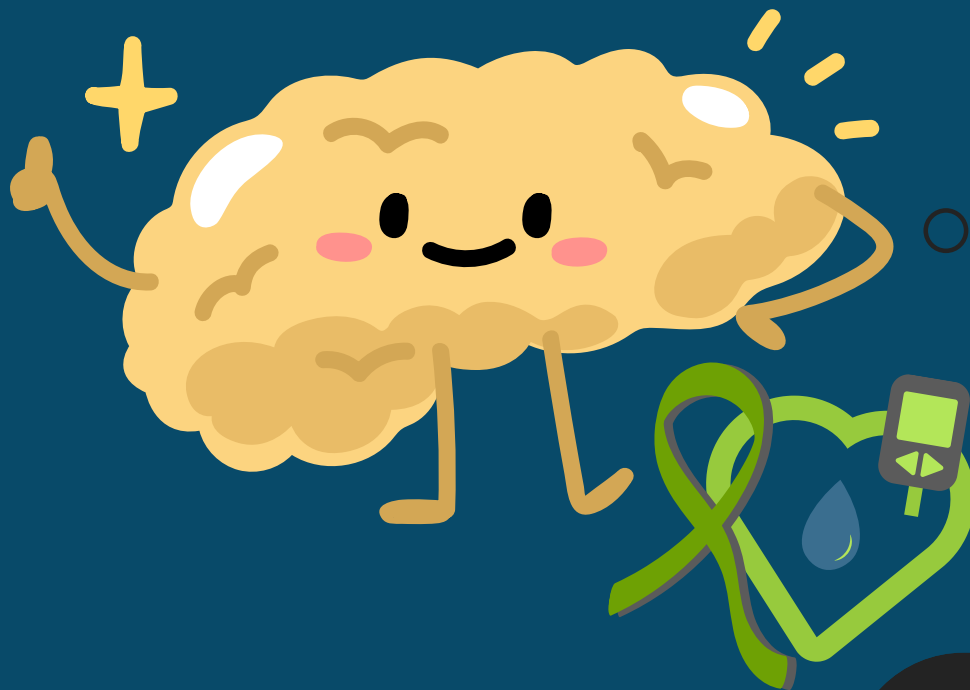
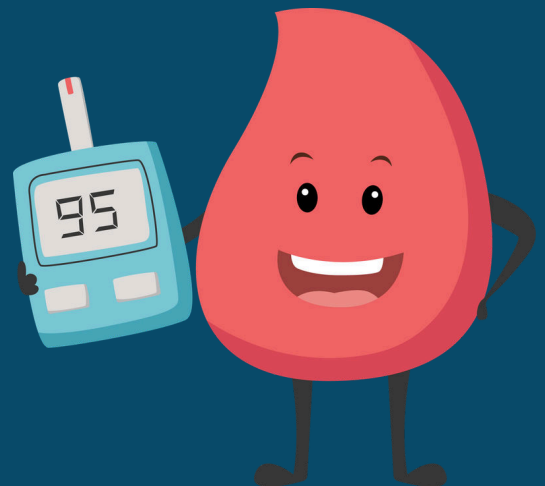




Table of Contents

Created in collaboration with an occupational therapy pediatric clinic, the Nevada Diabetes Association and guided by the Occupational Therapy Practice Framework (OTPF).

| | |
|---------------------------|----|
| What is Type 1 Diabetes? | 3 |
| Impact on participation | 4 |
| Occupational therapy role | 5 |
| Safety Guide | 6 |
| Routine Chart | 7 |
| Self-advocacy tools | 8 |
| School 504 plan | 9 |
| Nevada Resources | 10 |
| References | 11 |



WHAT IS TYPE 1 DIABETES?



Type 1 Diabetes (T1D)

Type 1 Diabetes is a chronic autoimmune condition in which the body's immune system attacks and destroys the cells in the pancreas that produce the hormone insulin. Insulin helps regulate blood glucose levels by allowing glucose to be used for energy. Without insulin, glucose builds up in the bloodstream, leading to high blood sugar levels that can be dangerous if left untreated.



T1D is commonly diagnosed in children and adolescents, but can happen at any age. It is **not** caused by lifestyle, or diet and cannot be prevented like Type 2 diabetes. Children with T1D require daily management, which includes monitoring blood glucose levels, administering insulin, and balancing food intake and physical activity. With proper support and education, children with T1D can safely participate and engage in daily and meaningful routines.



OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY ROLE

Occupational therapy (OT) focuses on helping children participate safely in meaningful activities such as daily routines, school, play and self-care by reducing barriers while managing their condition.

OT Role:

- Promote safe participation
- Create habits and routines
- Support independence for health management
- Develop self-advocacy skills
- Environmental modifications
- Fatigue management techniques
- Emotional regulation strategies

OT benefits when a child has:

- Difficulty managing diabetes during daily routines
- Frequently missed participation due to fatigue
- Difficulty communicating needs
- Emotional inconsistency from fluctuating glucose levels



IMPACT ON PARTICIPATION

Fluctuations in glucose levels can affect a child's academic performance, participation in play, and social interactions with friends. The child may need to pause during activities to check blood sugar levels, eat snacks, or receive insulin, which can interrupt participation.

DAILY ROUTINES

- Independence
- Task completion
- Sleep

SCHOOL

- Attention and memory are affected by high and low glucose levels
- Symptoms can impact energy
- Staff awareness is required for safety and inclusion

PLAY/ SPORTS

- Changes in level of activity can affect blood sugar levels
- Requires planning ahead to support safe participation



SAFETY GUIDE

Low Blood Sugar (Hypoglycemia)

Below 70mg/dl

Common symptoms:

- Excessive sweating
- Faintness, headache
- Pounding of heart
- Blurred vision, shakiness
- Hunger
- Confusion
- Appearance of drunkenness

What to do:

1. Check blood sugar by pricking finger
2. Give carbohydrates
 - Juice, Glucose tablets
3. Wait 15 min, recheck

* Call 911 or administer glucagon if child is unconscious*

High Blood Sugar (Hyperglycemia)

Above target range

Common symptoms:

- Increased thirst and urination
- Fatigue
- Difficulty concentrating
- Ketones in urine
- Abdominal pain
- Disorientation
- Fruity-smelling breath

What to do:

1. Check blood sugar by pricking finger
2. Follow medical insulin plan as directed
3. Encourage water intake and check urine for ketones
4. Monitor for worsening symptoms

Glucose monitoring is crucial when determining high or low blood sugar levels.

For information on blood monitoring call your doctor or the

Nevada Diabetes Association at

800-379-3839.



ROUTINE CHART

OT supports the development of structured routines and habits that make daily tasks more manageable. Consistent routines can improve independence, reduce stress, and support safe participation at home, school, and community settings for children with Type 1 diabetes.

| Time | Activity | Diabetes treatment |
|-----------|--------------------|---|
| Morning | Wake up /breakfast | Check blood sugar/treat if needed |
| School AM | Class time | Monitor levels/ symptoms |
| Lunch | Eat Meal | Check blood sugar/ treat if needed |
| School PM | Recess | Snack if needed, continue to monitor levels/ symptoms |
| Afternoon | Homework/Play | Monitor levels |
| Evening | Dinner/ Bedtime | Check blood sugar/treat if needed |



SELF-ADVOCACY TOOLS

OT supports self-advocacy by helping children develop communication skills, confidence, and independence in managing daily routines. Practicing what to say and when to ask for help can improve participation in school, during play, and community environments.

"HOW TO SUPPORT ME" CARD

My name is _____.

I have **Type 1 diabetes**. I may:

- Feel shaky, dizzy, or tired
- Need to check my blood sugar
- Need a snack or drink
- Need to use the restroom more often

Please help me by:

- Letting me check & treat my blood sugar
- Allowing me to eat a snack
- Allowing breaks as needed

Emergency:

- Follow my medical care plan as directed.
- Call 911 if I am unconscious

Emergency Contact: _____



SCHOOL - 504

WHAT IS A 504 PLAN?

A 504 Plan is a legal document that helps ensure the child receives the support they need at school. Children with Type 1 Diabetes are eligible for a 504 plan and can be requested through the school. Collaboration with teachers, nurses and review of medical documentation will help determine accommodations needed.

OT based school accommodations:

- Scheduled blood glucose checks
- Flexibility for diabetes care and rest as needed
- Access to snacks, water, and diabetes supplies at all times
- Extended time for school work during fatigue
- Appropriate planning during physical activity for safe participation
- Staff education on recognizing and responding to symptoms

NEVADA RESOURCES

SOUTHERN NEVADA

- **NEVADA DIABETES ASSOCIATION**
 - E: INFO@DIABETESNV.ORG, P: 800-379-3839 EXT.104
 - [HTTPS://DIABETESNV.ORG/](https://diabetesnv.org/)
- **AMERICAN DIABETES ASSOCIATION**
 - [HTTPS://DIABETES.ORG/](https://diabetes.org/)
- **DIGNITY HEALTH MEDICAL GROUP NEVADA - ST. ROSE PEDIATRIC ENDOCRINOLOGY**
 - 10001 S EASTERN AVE # 209, HENDERSON, NV 89052, P:(702) 616-5865
- **INTERMOUNTAIN HEALTH TENAYA DIABETES & ENDOCRINOLOGY CLINIC**
 - 2880 NORTH TENAYA WAY, SUITE 320, LAS VEGAS, NV 89128, P:(702) 304-5727
- **LA CANADA CLINIC - DIABETES & ENDOCRINOLOGY**
 - 3131 LA CANADA STREET, SUITE 140, LAS VEGAS, NV 89169, P:(702) 304-5725
- **UNLV HEALTH DIABETES & ENDOCRINOLOGY**
 - 1707 W. CHARLESTON BLVD., SUITE 290, LAS VEGAS, NV 89102, P:(702) 671-6469
- **DESERT ENDOCRINOLOGY**
 - 8925 W. SAHARA AVENUE LAS VEGAS, NV 89117, P:(702) 387-8868
 - 2415 W. HORIZON RIDGE PARKWAY, HENDERSON, NV 89052, P:(702) 434-8400
- **SOUTHERN HILLS HOSPITAL & MEDICAL CENTER**
 - 9300 W SUNSET RD LAS VEGAS, NV 89148, P:(702) 916 - 5000

NORTHERN NEVADA

- **NORTHERN NEVADA ENDOCRINOLOGY**
 - 665 SIERRA ROSE DR, RENO, NV 89511, P:(775) 786-6770
- **RENOWN CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL**
 - 1155 MILL ST, RENO, NV 89502, P:(775) 982-5437

THANK YOU



REFERENCES

American Occupational Therapy Association. (2020). *Occupational therapy practice framework: Domain and process* (4th ed.). *American Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 74(Suppl. 2), 7412410010. <https://doi.org/10.5014/ajot.2020.74S2001>

American Occupational Therapy Association. (2021). *Occupational therapy practice guidelines for children and youth with type 1 diabetes*. *American Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 75(5), 7505200010. <https://doi.org/10.5014/ajot.2021.75S1>

Clark County School District. (n.d.). Section 504 plans. <https://sites.google.com/nv.ccsd.net/section504plans/home>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2023). *Data & statistics on diabetes*. <https://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/php/data-research/index.html>

Imperatore, G., Mayer-Davis, E. J., Orchard, T. J., Zhong, V. W., & SEARCH for Diabetes in Youth Study Group. (2018). Prevalence of type 1 diabetes in U.S. youth. *Diabetes Care*, 41(11), 2216–2225. <https://doi.org/10.2337/dc18-1688>

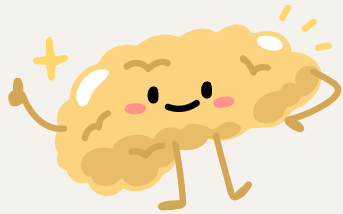
National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases. (2023). *Diabetes in America*. <https://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/health-statistics/diabetes-statistics>

Nevada Diabetes Association. (2023). *Programs and services for children with diabetes*. <https://diabetesnv.org>



T1D and Daily Living

Occupational Therapy Role in Type 1 Diabetes



- Build routines
- Support independence for health management
- Develop self-advocacy skills
- Promote participation in play, school and daily routines
- Recommend environmental modifications
- Assistance with 504 planning

Impact on Participation

- Behavior
- Energy changes
- Attention
- Safety



Routine

- Schedule glucose checks
- Prep diabetic bag with snack and supplies
- Plan ahead for activity
- Organization



Communication Support

My name is _____.

I have Type 1 diabetes.

I feel shaky when ...

I need to check my blood sugar...

I need a snack or drink...

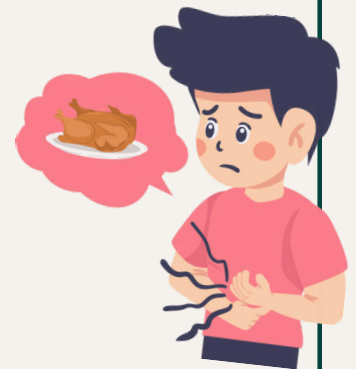
Please help me by...

Emergency Contact: _____

Low vs High Blood sugar levels

HYPOGLYCEMIA

- Faintness, headache
- Blurred vision
- Shakiness
- Hunger
- Confusion



HYPERGLYCEMIA

- Increased thirst and urination
- Ketones in urine
- Abdominal pains
- Fruity-smelling breath



Emergency

- Follow medical care plan as directed.
- Call 911 if I am unconscious.

(Nevada Diabetes Association; American Occupational Therapy Association, 2020)

