

CAMPS AND DIABETES

Having diabetes can be tough at times. Having to check your blood sugar levels, take your insulin, and think about what you are eating and how active you are can all be a real pain, especially on top of all the other hassles of being a teenager.

There is no denying that life can feel hard and unfair sometimes but remember you probably would still feel this way even if you did not have diabetes. Whatever difficulties and frustrations you may encounter now that you have diabetes, the staff at the Starship diabetes service are here to help you along the way.

Are you longing to leave it all behind and head to the fun of camp? Diabetes will be going with you but doesn't need to slow you down. Why don't you check out this newsletter stuffed full of advice about the practical side of controlling your diabetes whilst on camp.

Whatever the camp you can be sure that you will be more active than usual. For all you really active kids - these camps packed full of action activities such as rock climbing, sailing, hiking, swimming etc you can be sure that your insulin doses will need a hefty cut (up to 50% in fact). You really should talk to your Diabetes Nurse Specialist before you leave so you can work out together by what amount your insulin should be cut back.

No way - I can't cut my insulin by that much...

Believe the hype! Hypoglycaemia (low blood sugar) will happen when you are at camp if you do not take precautions to prevent it. There is no definite way of predicting hypos however they can be more likely to happen at camp for the following reasons:

- Meals are often not as regular at camp as usual
- Meals are delayed (especially if you are on a twice daily regimen and meals are not exactly to time as per usual)
- You did not have enough carbohydrate with your meal/snack
- Strenuous exercise without additional carbohydrate
- Insulin doses at camp are not reduced
- Getting hot (a hot bath or being in the sun for long periods) can increase the rate at which insulin is absorbed.
- You have had too much alcohol to drink

Get Wise and Know your Warning Signs

Your warning signs are going to be your back up. Everyone with diabetes has different signs and symptoms but some of the common ones are: felling shaky, sweating, hunger, tiredness, blurred vision, finding it hard to concentrate, headache, feeling tearful or becoming stropo.

Hypos can come on really quickly at camp. If you're not sure whether you are having one, don't be stupid and ignore the signs. Do a blood test. If you feel so bad that you don't have time to test, eat quickly and then test your levels later.

HYPO TIPS

- STOP what you are doing - ignoring a hypo will NOT make it go away.
- TELL your friends you are having a hypo
- EAT or DRINK glucose tabs, juice drink or jelly beans
- SIT DOWN & RELAX until you start to feel better
- FOLLOW UP with a snack like a sandwich, piece of fruit, or milk drink to make sure you don't have another hypo

In the Public Eye

It is really normal to feel anxious or afraid about having a hypo whilst at camp. You may feel embarrassed or worried about the reaction of other people. However sometimes during a hypo, you may be confused and be unable to sort yourself out. It is far better to have people around you who know about your diabetes, what hypos are and most importantly how to help you.

It may help for people at camp to know:

That your blood glucose level could go low at any time

Why you could need juice, jelly beans or glucose tablets

What you look like when you are having a hypo

That you may be terribly stropky during a hypo

What to do if you have a severe hypo. If you become unconscious they must understand that they must never try to give you food or drink as this could cause you to choke. If possible they should place you flat on your side with your head tilted slightly back. They should administer hypo gel to your gums and then call an ambulance stating "diabetic emergency"

Medic Alert - Be Smart

Having an identity card, bracelet or necklace will be useful if you become disoriented or unconscious. It could save your life..

Physical activity is great for everyone. It will help you feel good, look better and keep trim. Camp in particular - whatever the activities can help your diabetes control. Physical activity helps to lower blood glucose levels. This is because when you are active the muscles are encouraged to take up glucose from your bloodstream for energy. Diabetes should never stop you from doing what you've always done and camp is no exception to this rule. However this doesn't mean that you can get away with no preparation.

Watch where you are doing your injections whilst at camp. Insulin will be absorbed more quickly from an active area. For example if you inject into your thigh before you go running, your insulin will be absorbed more quickly (and work faster) because the activity means you are using the area more. So whilst at camp the best place to inject is really your stomach - because unless you are at boot camp doing 100 sit ups/day, it is normally pretty inactive.

Delayed Hypoglycaemia

Hypos can happen up to 36 hours after doing lots of physical activity - crikey! That's a long time and it is because when you have stopped being active, muscles will continue to use extra glucose to replace stores. It is a really good idea to eat within an hour of strenuous activities at camp and always have a nice hearty carbohydrate-laden supper at bedtime to help your body replace its' stores. As long as you are confident and can demonstrate to us that you can manage your diabetes, we will support you to convince your Mum and Dad that you are ready for camp away from home without them. This may sound like a tall order but thousands of kids with diabetes go away with their

school/other community based groups every year and return safely. If your school has objections get your healthcare team to gang up on them!

TOP TIPS FOR BEING ACTIVE AT CAMP

- Test BGL before you start
- Drink Sports Drink (Replace, Powerade) before you start, during exercise and after you finish (500ml for about 45 minutes high intensity exercise)
- Don't take part in exercise if $BGL > 13\text{mmol/L}$ and you have ketones in your blood or urine
- Talk to your Nurse about reductions to your usual insulin regimen
- Eat enough carbohydrate at meals and snacks
- Carry hypo food at all times (Carerro gel is great)

