



DIABETES CHEAT SHEET FOR PROFESSORS

You're most likely reading this because one of your students has informed you that they have Type 1 Diabetes. This sheet is a quick run-through meant to familiarize you with Type 1 diabetes and its impact on you and your student.

TIPS

High blood sugar means that there is too much sugar in the blood - your student will need fluids and rest, and may not be capable of thinking clearly.

Low blood sugar means that there is not enough sugar in the blood - your student will need a snack with fast acting sugar and time for their blood sugar to rise. They might seem out of it or confused. It usually takes 15 minutes for blood sugar to get back in range.

WHAT IS TYPE 1 DIABETES?

Type 1 diabetes is an autoimmune disease that affects the body's ability to process food and turn it into energy. In people with type 1 diabetes, the beta cells in the pancreas (which make insulin) no longer function. Insulin is a hormone which turns sugar into energy. Without enough insulin, sugar builds up in the blood stream (high blood sugar) and the body's cells have no way to transform the sugar into energy. Without insulin, the body is starved of resources. You cannot survive without insulin. A Person With Diabetes (PWD) needs to inject insulin into their body through an insulin pump, insulin pen, or syringe; and to monitor their blood sugar to see how much food or insulin they need to help keep the levels of both balanced. Unfortunately, there isn't an exact science to it as there are many other factors which can affect blood sugars, including stress, hormones, weather, and physical activity. This "balancing act" results in fluctuations of high and low blood sugar - neither of which allow for clear thinking (ie. during a test).

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR ME?

- You might notice the student checking their blood sugar on a glucometer, and/or making adjustments by programming their insulin pump or injecting themselves with insulin pens or syringes. These actions are completely necessary, and most PWDs are able to carry out all of these tasks very discreetly, and safely – so rest assured it won't interrupt class time.
- Your student with diabetes may need to eat/drink in your class. Whether it's because they follow a strict eating schedule, or their blood sugar is low, it's important to allow a PWD to eat in your classroom.
- Both high and low blood sugar can affect a PWD's ability to function/concentrate (on a test, or other assignments, for example.) Keep in mind that these fluctuations in blood sugar are sometimes caused by factors completely outside of the student's control. In some cases, a student may ask to postpone a test or assignment due date because their blood sugar was off and they were not operating to the best of their ability. Ask what accommodations they might need.
- Some students with diabetes will register for accommodations to ensure their needs are met. Other students may not have registered for accommodations. If a student has a request due to one of the above mentioned reasons, but is not registered for accommodations, consider what you have learned from this sheet of paper before making your decision.