

Dear Second Grade Parent,

Our son Alexander has Type 1 Diabetes. We have explained this condition to your child, Alex's classmate, so that he/she may have a better understanding of what they may occasionally witness. We read them a short, colorful book that explains what diabetes is. The basic emphasis is on the fact that Alex is a regular little boy, whose body needs help in using food for energy.

What Is Type 1 Diabetes – A Short Summary

Type 1 Diabetes is a disease in which a person's own immune system destroys the islet cells in the pancreas. Islet cells produce insulin. Insulin allows food and drink to enter our body's cells as glucose, giving us the energy necessary for survival. A person with Type 1 Diabetes can no longer produce insulin. Insulin must be given by multiple injections or an insulin pump, daily, in order to survive. Blood sugar levels can vary widely from low to high, and must be monitored closely by testing a drop of blood, many times throughout the day.

Low blood sugar levels are an immediate concern. Exercise, lack of food, or too much insulin will cause blood sugar levels to drop. If left untreated, this can lead to seizures, coma, or death. Food and drink with carbohydrates will cause blood sugar levels to rise. Prolonged high blood sugar levels must be avoided in order to reduce the risk of complications such as blindness, limb amputations, kidney failure, and heart disease.

The Truth About Type 1 Diabetes

A person cannot get Type 1 Diabetes by eating too much sugar.

Type 1 Diabetes is NOT contagious under any circumstances.

People with Type 1 Diabetes can eat sweets as part of a nutritional meal plan.

A child with Type 1 Diabetes will not outgrow the condition.

We are grateful to have been able to share information that will make Alex and the other students feel more comfortable at school. It has been our experience to note that children/Alex's friends are as matter of fact and accepting of his condition as Alex is. After all, when it is not a mystery, it is not scary. We do ask that you do not refer to Alex as "diabetic", but instead say that Alex has diabetes. He is not his disease.

What Your Child Learned

We can't catch diabetes

We all have insulin in our bodies. It helps the food we eat give us energy.

People with diabetes don't have any insulin in their bodies.

Alex gets seven shots of insulin every day. They only hurt a little bit.

Sometimes Alex, or the school nurse, puts a tiny drop of blood from Alex's arm or leg into a meter. This meter tells if Alex's blood sugar level is low, high, or in range. This is called a blood sugar check. Alex does this at least ten times each day.

Sometimes, especially after exercising, Alex's blood sugar level may be too low. Alex may need to have an extra snack or juice to help him have more energy.

Alex can eat any kind of food, but we must keep track of what it is and how much he is eating, to make sure that he has enough insulin too.

Occasionally, Alex may need to drink lots of water. He drinks lots of water when his blood sugar level is too high.

Alex wears a special bracelet that tells people he has diabetes.

Kids with diabetes like to have fun!

Thank you for your understanding. We would be more than happy to answer any questions you might have in regards to this subject. Please feel free to send us email or call us on the phone.

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