Top Tips for Helping a Child With Diabetes

by NEWLIFEOUTLOOK TEAM

How to Care for a Child With Type 1 Diabetes

When you have a child or teenager with type 1 diabetes, things are going to be very different for you as a family. However, the disease need not define you as a family and it need not be what defines your child. So, how to care for a child with type 1 diabetes becomes essential.

For young kids with type 1 diabetes, it is difficult to suddenly understand all the changes around them. The monitoring, the injections, food control, and more may make them feel like it’s a punishment. It will also be quite overwhelming to take in suddenly, reassure your child, and communicate constantly, so they can let out what’s on their mind.

The important task a parent has besides being the primary caregiver is to educate and equip your child to tackle the tasks and regulations on their own. This independence is critical to allow your child to grow and have a good amount of self-esteem. While the urge to be highly protective is strong, bear in mind that you will do more harm than good by being that way.

Do Your Research On Diabetes

It is essential to learn as much as you can about diabetes if you want to properly care for your child. There is a wealth of resources out there that you can look to for this information.

Not only should you consider scouring the Internet to find out more about type 1 diabetes, but it's also a good idea to read books and magazines about the condition.

Arming yourself with as much knowledge as possible will help you take the proper steps in treating and caring for your child.

Talk to Your Child About Their Condition

Regardless of how young your child might be, it is important to talk to him or her about diabetes.

Make sure that your child understands how essential it is to eat well and to take his or her insulin dependency seriously. However, you should try to be as positive as possible; you don't want your child to be too frightened.

Luckily, a physician or counselor can help you talk to your child about his or her diagnosis in the right way.

Teens and Type 1 Diabetes: Emotional and Physical Changes

Puberty and teenage years bring their own set of challenges for children as it is a time of asserting and exploring their sexuality, identity, and independence. The constant image in the media of teens with perfect bodies and

skin, adds to the dilemma, and this medical condition can lead to feelings of anger.

There is a lot on their mind and they may find it hard to stick to the routines which until then they followed to the letter. There is often social isolation that is self-imposed due to a fear of being rejected by their peers as they are ‘different.'

Denial, aggressive behavior, and food binges are all on account of their need to act out, and the lack of control they experience over their body when the blood sugar levels are always beyond their control. Research has shown that during puberty, the physiological changes at work tend to wreak havoc with sugar levels, making things chaotic for teens with diabetes.

Being supportive and keeping a close watch to step in when things are bordering on danger is important. Playing a passive role and thinking they will snap out of it can be quite scarring for you, as a parent, and for the teen, as well.

Counseling, Support Groups, and Sports

As a parent, you can help them by taking them to a therapist or finding a support group where they can discuss their fears with other peers. Consider enrolling them in a camp or some other activity where they can stay involved with things to keep their mind off this condition and not let it be the center of their lives. Teens can be shown how they can master other areas of their life.

Enrolling them in sports or kickboxing or other pursuits that they are interested in will allow them to achieve some form of control and discipline in their life. There is often a need for spontaneity that is at war with the need to watch what they eat and do. This is the crux of the problem, teens want to be able to eat what they like, drink what they like, and do what they want to with their peers. Understanding the conflicts will help you tackle things better.

Focus on Nutrition

Although insulin is important for a child who has diabetes, nutrition is also essential. To help ensure that your child is eating correctly, consider talking to a nutritionist for tips about what your little one should and should not eat.

There are also plenty of websites and books out there that provide healthy, diabetic-friendly recipes that you can prepare for your entire family. By making healthy, diabetic-friendly eating normality around your household, you can help ensure that your little one stays healthy without feeling left out.

You can even learn about sugar-free cakes, cookies and other desserts that will allow your child to indulge without consuming too much sugar.