

Supporting under 5s with type 1 diabetes at meal times

Nutrition and Dietetics

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Information for Patients

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Introduction

You may feel upset and worried about how to manage things. This can be worries about your child's diet and eating patterns.

The Diabetes Team are here to help you. They will help you make sure that diabetes does not affect how your child feels about food.

What can my child eat now?

The nutritional needs of children with diabetes are not different to those without diabetes.

There are no banned or special foods they should eat.

Your child will eat food from all food groups. Meal times should be a relaxed and social time for everyone.

**Health information and support is available at www.nhs.uk
or call 111 for non-emergency medical advice**

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To give feedback about this information sheet, contact uhl-tr.informationforpatientsmailbox@nhs.net

Tips for meal times:

Meal time structure

- Try to keep to 3 main meals a day.
- Try to give 2 to 3 snacks a day. Your child does not always need to snack between meals.
- Your child should be eating big meals throughout the day. They should not be eating small amounts of food throughout the day. This may lead to high blood glucose levels and a poor appetite at their next meal.

Fussy eaters

If your child does not eat the meals you give them, do not panic! It is a good idea to limit meal times to around 30 minutes.

If your child has not eaten the carbohydrates of the meal then you will need to make up for what they have not eaten. This is to prevent blood sugar levels dropping (hypoglycaemia) later on. Try and make up for the missed carbohydrates with non treat foods or fluids like milk or pure fruit juice. Do not offer sweet treats like cakes or biscuits to encourage them to eat. Children quickly learn to refuse a meal if these foods are offered instead.

Insulin timing

If you are not sure how much your child will eat do not give the insulin after they have eaten unless told to by the medical team. It is best to **give insulin before eating** to give it time to start working.

Keep to a regular meal pattern. Give correct portion sizes. This all helps to make sure your child eats the food they are given.

The table below shows the estimated amount of carbohydrate your child needs a day. Make sure you are giving the correct portion sizes.

Age	Estimated carbohydrate requirement a day	Carbohydrates offered a meal
6 months	70 to 75g	15 to 25g
1 year	85 to 95g	20 to 30g
2 years	115 to 125g	30 to 40g
3 years	135 to 150g	40 to 45g
4 years	160 to 185g	50 to 60g

Breast and formula feeding

Breast milk has carbohydrates. Depending on the amount taken, your child is likely to need some insulin.

It can be difficult to work out how much breast milk your child has taken. You must look at patterns in blood glucose (where this is available) and estimate how they have drunk. This will help you to decide if they need insulin and how much.

Breast milk has about 7g of carbohydrates per 100ml. It is estimated children 6 months of age will take around 200ml per feed. It is safe to start by giving insulin for a minimum of 7g of carbohydrate after a feed.

Try to have a regular routine with breast and formula feeds. This is similar to meal times. Try not to let your baby graze or feed continuously throughout the day and night. This may make it more difficult to keep a track. It could lead to high blood glucose if too little insulin is given throughout the day.

Vitamin supplements

All children up until 4 years of age, who have less than 500ml of infant formula per day, should take vitamin drops containing vitamins A, C and D.

If you are not sure which one is right for you, speak with your dietitian.

Activity

All young children, with and without diabetes, should be as active as possible.

A lot of activity for this age group will be unplanned, so it can feel difficult to manage and prepare for. Depending on the type and length of activity, being active may cause low blood glucose levels.

Always carry treatments for hypoglycaemia. Effects of the activity may make it more difficult to notice symptoms of hypoglycaemia.

For planned activity, it is a good idea to check blood glucose levels before the activity. Then check this every 30 minutes if possible. If the blood glucose is 7mmol or less, you will need to give more carbohydrates.

For more information you can search for: 'Exercise advice for young people with type 1 diabetes' or leaflet number 908. Or speak with the Diabetes Team for more advice.

Remember!

It can be a stressful time after your child has been diagnosed. Remember to have fun with foods. Make sure your child tries lots of different tastes and flavours to help encourage them to eat a variety of foods, and have a healthy relationship with food.



More information

The following websites offer more information on eating well for babies and young children:

- Infant and Toddler Forum: www.infantandtoddlerforum.org
- Child Feeding Guide: www.childfeedingguide.co.uk
- First Steps Nutrition: www.firststepsnutrition.org

Contact details

Dietitian: **0116 258 5400 / 0116 258 3930**

Nurses office: **0116 258 6796**

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