



Welcoming Girls with Diabetes into Your Troop

Diabetes is a metabolic disease in which the body's inability to produce any or enough insulin causes elevated levels of glucose (sugar) in the blood. There are two kinds of diabetes: Type 1 and Type 2. Type 1 Diabetes is sometimes known as Juvenile Diabetes and occurs when the body's immune system destroys the cells in the pancreas that produce insulin. Without insulin, the body cannot properly process sugar from a diet. Type 2 Diabetes, sometimes known as Adult-Onset Diabetes, is increasingly common in children, and occurs when the body either resists the effects of insulin or doesn't produce enough insulin.

Either form of Diabetes can cause instances of lowered blood sugar levels or elevated blood sugar levels even when properly maintained with diet, exercise, and medication. This can be dangerous and should be regulated. Symptoms of a blood sugar imbalance can include thirst, frequent urination, moodiness, tiredness, nausea, and vomiting.

Girls are more likely than boys to have diabetes. Due to the increase in diabetes in the United States, the odds are that most of your girls know someone with diabetes.

The girl may have medication to regulate these symptoms in the form of an orally taken pill, an insulin pump, or through insulin injections. She also may have a blood sugar monitor which helps her to monitor the levels of blood sugar present in her body. She may also have special dietary restrictions or needs to help her maintain the correct glucose levels. Glucose tablets and protein bars are common supplements that can be kept on hand in the event of a sudden blood sugar dip or elevation.

Some suggestions and strategies for preparing for and including girls with Diabetes in your troop:

1. Consult with the girl's parent/guardian beforehand about any medication or medical equipment that may need to be present with the girl or adult during meetings-- be clear about how and when to administer the medication or treatment and be sure it's being stored in a safe location away from general accessibility of the girls
2. Ask the parent/guardian to provide you with ideas and instructions about what foods/snacks to serve and when to serve it (frequency)-- following her special dietary needs is very important to avoid instances of lowered or elevated blood sugar levels
3. Unless the girl and her parent/guardian prefer confidentiality within the troop, have the girl share about her differing abilities and special needs with the troop and allow the other girls to ask questions in a sensitive and caring manner. This will promote better understanding and allow everyone to work together as a troop to ensure that everyone's needs are met
4. Always consult with the parent/guardian beforehand to be sure you're providing for the girl's needs to the best of your ability-- they will know the best methods and strategies to help their child

For more help and information please visit American Diabetes Association <http://www.diabetes.org/diabetes-basics/>

If you have other questions or concerns you may contact GSEP via email at memberservices@gsep.org or via phone at 215-564-2030

This document is not intended to replace or supersede any doctor's instructions nor should it in any way be taken as medical advice or directions. This resource is a suggestion for GSEP volunteers to use while welcoming girls with special needs to their troops and is for informational and educational purposes only. Please follow a parent/guardian's instructions in the medical care of their child and make sure you always have the appropriate medical and troop permission forms completed and available for Emergency Medical Services (EMS) personnel.