

CAREGIVER DOs AND DONTs

For many parents, dropping your T1D child off at college is probably one of the hardest things you'll ever have to do.

To help this transition go as smoothly as possible, here are some tips from our students and caregivers about what to do (and not to do).





DO

Instill a sense of independence in your child.

If you haven't already, now is the time to start transferring responsibility of diabetes care to your child. It may seem scary, but you'll feel 100 times better when you're driving away from campus knowing that your child can manage their diabetes without you. By the time they leave for college, they should be completely self-sufficient when it comes to their daily diabetes management, including the following:

- ▶ Checking blood sugar regularly
- ▶ Cleaning and changing pump/CGM sites
- ▶ Carb counting
- ▶ Taking injections
- ▶ Having an understanding of a sick day plan
- ▶ Dosing insulin
- ▶ Being able to tell friends/roommates that they have diabetes
- ▶ Registering for accommodations on campus
- ▶ Knowing when something isn't right and acting on it by calling a doctor or going to the hospital
- ▶ Knowing what low and high blood sugars are and how to correct them.



DO

Breathe.

Is your child not taking responsibility "the way they should be"? It is very common for people with diabetes to have a hard time in their teenage and young adult years. Remember, you cannot force anyone to do something, even your child. It takes time for some young adults to realize how important it is to take care of themselves. Sometimes it takes a few rough patches to get on the right path. Be patient. Be supportive. Breathe. This is a marathon, not a sprint.



DO

Continue to help your child with the more logistical elements of diabetes management.

- ▶ Navigating health insurance and payment for medical services
- ▶ Ordering/receiving medical supplies
- ▶ Providing motivation and emotional support

CAREGIVER DOs AND DONTs (Continued)



DO

Create a communication agreement.

Have a conversation with your child and come to an agreement about their expectations of you, and vice versa—and stick to it. Use CDN's 'Family Communication Agreement' on page 8 as a starting point.



DO

Keep busy after move-in.

While you're probably a little bit sad that your child is at school, remember that this is an exciting time for them—and you. Do something for yourself. Join a club. Exercise more. Go dancing. Get involved in something that you may not have had time for before—it will help you focus on things other than worrying about your child. *(We promise we're not being patronizing; this is advice that parents have shared with us.)*



DO

Send your child a care package.

Diabetes or not, it's really exciting to get mail from home when you're at school. Send your child a package to let them know you're thinking of them. You can include whatever you want, but here are some suggestions:

- ▶ Powdered drink packages ▶ Extra low snacks ▶ Streaming movie subscription
- ▶ Colorful pens/pencils ▶ Their favorite candy ▶ Gum ▶ Old/funny photos
- ▶ Socks with a silly design on them *(it sounds funny, but they get lost very easily at school)*
- ▶ Hand lotion/sanitizer ▶ A batch of their favorite homemade baked goods



DO

Join the Parents of the College Diabetes Network Facebook Group!

This group is for parents of teens and young adults with diabetes who are thinking about, getting ready for, or already in college. Share successes, get support and advice, and learn from other parents who've been in your shoes. Request to join at [facebook.com/groups/CDNParentGroup](https://www.facebook.com/groups/CDNParentGroup)

**DON'T**

Ask your child what their blood sugar is all the time.

Some families have worked out agreements where the student texts their parents what their blood sugar is at a specific time of day. Others don't share this information at all. Whatever you decide on, don't send your child a slew of text messages requesting constant blood sugar updates. College is about them, not their blood sugar.

DON'T

Get angry with your child for having a high HbA1c.

College is incredibly tough on diabetes management. Even the most proactive student is bound to have some bad days (or weeks, or months). Instead of getting angry, talk to your student and ask if there's any way you can help.