



HAVING “THE TALK” WITH FRIENDS & ROOMMATES

Struggling to explain to your friends why you have a “pager” on your waist? Moving in with someone new? Or maybe you’ve been living with the same people for a while and you haven’t gotten around to anything past, “Sorry for the test strip you found in your shoe the other day.”

The bottom line is that it’s really important for the people around you to know (and understand!) your diabetes. While it’s normal to be self-conscious sometimes, just remember that your diabetes and all of the gadgets that come along with it make you unique - and your friends will probably think it’s kind of cool. Chances are they will want to learn more about what it is and how they can help you. Let us help you start the conversation.

WE SUGGEST...

- Using humor to help diffuse any tension you feel about telling your friend about diabetes.
- Feeling comfortable and confident in what you’re telling them (the more comfortable you are, the more comfortable they are going to feel about it!)
- Start simple, and add details from there (keep reading for more suggestions.)

TIP

Refer your friends, classmates, significant others, etc. to the Type 3 section of the College Diabetes Network website.

It contains helpful information on what diabetes is, and how they can best support you.

1 EXPLAIN WHAT TYPE 1 DIABETES IS

There are A LOT of people who don’t understand what Type 1 diabetes is, or that there is a difference between that and Type 2 diabetes. Try something like the description below, or practice a version that feels right to you...

“The pancreas produces insulin, which helps to convert sugar, starches, and other food into energy. My pancreas doesn’t work, so I have to measure insulin to put into my body myself. I am able to do that using (your insulin delivery method). It’s not an exact science, so that means I have to constantly monitor my blood sugar to make sure it isn’t too low or too high, and make adjustments when it is.”

2

EXPLAIN WHAT MAY HAPPEN IF YOUR BLOOD SUGAR IS TOO HIGH OR LOW

It's crucial for your friends to understand and recognize what being high and being low looks like. Be sure to explain your personal symptoms so they can provide assistance if necessary.

“When my blood sugar is high, it means that there is too much sugar in my body. I may be thirsty, aggravated, tired, or confused. I treat it by taking more insulin. When this happens, I don't feel well and may want to relax until I feel better.”



“When my blood sugar is low, it means that I don't have enough sugar in my body. I may start feeling tired, confused, dizzy, or sweat a lot. I treat it by eating or drinking something with fast-acting sugar in it, like juice or glucose tabs. When this happens, I don't feel well, and may not want to talk much until my blood sugar rises again.”

3

TELL YOUR FRIENDS HOW THEY MAY HAVE TO HELP

Even if you've never had a diabetes-related incident where you've needed help before, you need to explain this part to your friends – just in case.

“I (haven't/have) had a serious low blood sugar when I was too low to treat it myself. That being said, you should know to call 911 if this were to happen (again).”

4

TELL YOUR FRIENDS WHAT ELSE THEY CAN DO AND MAYBE ALSO TELL THEM WHAT THEY SHOULDN'T DO!

This depends entirely on you and how you feel. Here are just a few suggestions based on conversations we've had with young adults with diabetes in the past.

DO DON'T

- DO ask if I need anything when my sugar is going low
- DO ask me questions about diabetes when you are curious
- DO treat me the same way you treat your other friends
- DO respect my feelings around diabetes
- DON'T ask me “should you be eating that?”
- DON'T look at/comment negatively on my blood sugars

TIP

As long as you feel comfortable doing so, show your friends and roommates where you keep your Glucagon, and how to use it. There's even an app they can download from Lilly Diabetes on how to administer Glucagon.