Having a hypo doesn’t mean you go crazy

During a hypo the brain is not getting enough glucose to keep working normally. This may cause me to act strangely, confused or grumpy, but it is just temporary. I will return to normal once my blood glucose rises again.

A person with type 1 should eat healthy food just like everyone else. People with type 2 diabetes often start to use insulin as their condition progresses. This does not mean they have type 1 diabetes.

I can look after myself (most of the time)

Having diabetes does not mean that I tried any special treatment or cases, though if I am having a hypo I might need help getting something to eat if I can’t manage it myself. Most older kids and teenagers test their own blood glucose levels and give their own insulin injections.

Diabetes WA is the leading charity and peak consumer body representing people with diabetes in Western Australia and providing vital information and support to the community about diabetes.

Contact Us
www.diabeteswa.com.au

For further information
www.telethonjdfc.org.au

This brochure was originally developed in collaboration with a group of young people with type 1 diabetes in 2006. We thank them for their ideas, humour and inspiration.
Diabetes Basics

Diabetes/daie'bitiz/, n.
Type 1 diabetes (formerly juvenile or insulin-dependent diabetes) occurs when the body’s immune system destroys cells in the pancreas that produce insulin. Insulin helps the body to use glucose (or sugar) in the bloodstream for energy. 10-15% of all people with diabetes have type 1. It often begins in childhood or early adulthood but can occur at any age.

Diabetes Basics:
I could not have prevented my diabetes
I did not get diabetes because of the foods I’ve eaten, my weight or because I didn’t exercise enough. I got diabetes because I have a certain gene and something in the environment (we don’t know what) caused my immune system to attack its own cells.

I have to have daily insulin injections
A person with type 1 diabetes does not make any of their own insulin. We cannot live without insulin so it must be replaced, usually 2-4 times a day with a syringe, insulin pen or an insulin pump.

Sometimes I have a ‘hypo’
Hypoglycaemia or ‘hypo’ is the term used when the blood glucose level is too low. This may happen if I have exercised more than normal, missed a meal or had too much insulin. When I am hypo I can get shaky, sweaty, angry, tired, grumpy, confused, blurred vision and tingling or numb limbs and mouth.

When this happens I need sugar (e.g. jelly beans or lemonade) straight away to quickly increase my blood glucose level. After that I need a piece of fruit or a sandwich to make sure my blood glucose level does not drop again. If I am unconscious do not give me anything to eat. Call an ambulance on 000 immediately.

Diabetes is a lifelong condition that requires constant attention
To manage my diabetes I need to have multiple insulin injections daily and test my blood sugar four or more times each day. I need to balance insulin injections with what I eat, especially when I exercise and I always need to be prepared for a hypo.

Diabetes Facts

“You can’t catch diabetes”
“You can eat sugar if you have diabetes”
“It’s not a great idea, but if I forget an injection I won’t die”
“It’s not only overweight or old people who get diabetes”
“You can go bungy jumping with diabetes”
“You can travel with diabetes”

People with diabetes can do most of the things that anyone else can do, including sports, traveling and having children. There are also diabetic celebrities such as AFL footballers, Olympic swimmers and mountain climbers with type 1 diabetes. It can be difficult to remember to carry my diabetes gear, extra food and jelly beans with me.