

Type 1 Diabetes: Information for Parents and Guardians

In accordance with Senate Bill 18 (2026), which requires the development of type 1 diabetes informational materials for families, the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE), in collaboration with external partners, is providing this information to help parents and guardians better understand type 1 diabetes and recognize when to seek medical guidance.

What is Type 1 Diabetes?

Type 1 diabetes is an autoimmune disease in which the body does not produce insulin, a hormone needed to allow sugar (glucose) to enter the cells and be used for energy. Without insulin, blood sugar can't get into the cells and builds up in the bloodstream. High blood sugar is damaging to the body and causes many symptoms and complications of diabetes. It occurs when the body's immune system attaches to the cells in the pancreas that produce insulin. It is not caused by diet or lifestyle and cannot be prevented.

Risk factors and Warning Signs

Type 1 diabetes can develop at any age but is most often diagnosed in children and young adults. The exact cause is unknown but known risk factors can include family history and age. Common warning signs may include:

- Increased thirst
- Frequent urination
- Increased hunger
- Unexpected weight loss
- Fatigue
- Blurred vision

Symptoms of type 1 diabetes may develop rapidly and progress quickly. If left untreated, the condition can result in serious and potentially life-threatening complications. The signs and symptoms described above may be indicative of type 1 diabetes or other medical conditions. Parents and guardians who observe these early warning signs are strongly encouraged to promptly consult the child's primary care provider for evaluation.

Early Detection and Screening

Medical screening options may identify markers associated with type 1 diabetes before symptoms appear. These may include blood tests that detect diabetes-related autoantibodies.

Parents and guardians who have questions about screening should discuss available options with their child's primary care provider or another qualified healthcare provider.

Screening is a medical decision and, if pursued, should be performed by a healthcare provider. Depending on your child's screening and test results, the healthcare provider may refer you to a licensed specialist, such as an endocrinologist.

Schools do not conduct or coordinate medical screenings for type 1 diabetes.

When to Seek Medical care

It is recommended that parents and guardians immediately consult with their child's primary care provider to develop an appropriate treatment plan if they believe that their child displays warning signs associated with type 1 diabetes or has received positive early detection screening results. Parents and guardians are advised that a treatment plan will include consultation with, and examination by, both a pediatrician and a specialty health care provider licensed to practice medicine or osteopathy, including but not limited to endocrinology.

Additional Considerations

If a child is diagnosed with type 1 diabetes, parents and guardians should work with their healthcare provider and school staff to ensure appropriate care and support during the school day.

Additional Resources

For more information, parents and guardians may visit:

- [American Diabetes Association \(ADA\)](#)
- [Breakthrough T1D \[Formerly Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation \(JDRF\)\]](#)
- [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#)

This information is provided in accordance with Section 16 of Senate Bill 18 (2026). It is intended for informational purposes only and is not a substitute for medical advice. Families should consult with their healthcare provider for medical advice and guidance specific to their child's needs.