



Transitioning from School to Summer Routine

It's hard to believe that the school year is coming to a close and summer fun is just around the corner! If I close my eyes I can smell the charcoal warming up the grill and feel my toes in the cool water. I'm picturing long days at the pool, hiking the local trails, tubing down the river, and all the summer festivities. These are the things that make summertime so memorable for children. Before all the fun-in-the-sun activities get underway, there are a few things to keep in mind for families of children with type 1 diabetes.

The transition from a structured school routine to a more flexible summer schedule can cause a fluctuation in blood sugar patterns. An increase in physical activities, a change in meal patterns, and even travel can account for ups and downs. Excitement about an outing to the zoo or nervousness about summer camp, playing in the heat, and even skimping on sleep can all influence blood sugars. However, with a little planning you can take control of your child's blood sugar and avoid that A1C from creeping up over the summer months.

Even though summer days may flow in a somewhat inconsistent manner, it might be better to keep some sort of routine to manage your child's blood sugar.

- **Keep a log.** Logging blood sugars, diet, and exercise will help you and your child properly dose insulin in certain situations that are out of the norm from the regular school year.
- **Account for high activity.** During the summer children tend to spend a greater time running around and much of that time is in the heat. Your child may need to reduce insulin doses or eat more carbohydrates to offset the change in blood sugar. Also keep in mind that staying hydrated is extremely important in managing blood sugar. Keep a water bottle near!
- **Change in meal patterns.** During the school year meals are most likely planned and children may eat the same kind of foods from week to week. During the summer it's common to dine out more often, attend cookouts, and even try new foods. Some of these meals may come with a significant carbohydrate load. Do your best to find the nutrition information so you can calculate carbohydrate counts more accurately.

- **Prepare for long outings.** Over the summer your child may spend more time away from home. Make it a habit to keep enough supplies on them to cover an all day outing. Also keep in mind that insulin and glucose meters may not withstand the summer heat and carrying them a small cooler pack during outdoor excursion may be a good idea.

Summertime doesn't have to be a blood sugar roller coaster! Preparing for a change in day-to-day life and with a little planning, you and your children will have a better handle on diabetes over these next few months. You'll now be free to enjoy the summer and make tons of sunny memories!

Contributed by Carrie Claiborne, Dietetic Intern and Masters of Science in Nutrition student