

## Caring for Students with Type 1 Diabetes

Some students with Type 1 diabetes in Abbotsford schools may require assistance with their blood sugar monitoring or administration of insulin. These students are identified to the district learning support department and the principal of their schools. Collaboratively, they arrange for support staff to be trained through our Nursing Support Services to assist the student with their needs. This assistance ensures the students are kept safe and healthy at school.

### What is Diabetes

**Diabetes is a chronic disease in which blood glucose (sugar) levels are above normal.** People with diabetes have problems converting food to energy. After a meal, food is broken down into a sugar called glucose, which is carried by the blood to cells throughout the body. Insulin, a hormone made in the pancreas, allows glucose to enter the cells of the body where it is used for energy.

**Maintaining Optimal Blood Glucose Control** The goal of effective diabetes management is to control blood glucose levels by keeping them within a target range determined by the student's personal diabetes health care team. Optimal blood glucose control helps to promote normal growth and development and to prevent the immediate dangers of glucose levels that are too high or too low. Maintaining blood glucose levels within the target range also can help prevent or delay the long-term complications of diabetes such as heart disease, stroke, blindness, kidney failure, gum disease, nerve disease, and amputations of the foot or leg.

The key to maintaining optimal blood glucose control is to balance carefully food intake, physical activity, insulin, and/or medication. As a general rule, food makes blood glucose levels go up. Physical activity, insulin, and diabetes medications make blood glucose levels go down. Several other factors, such as growth and puberty, physical and emotional stress, illness, or injury, also can affect blood glucose levels.

With all of these factors coming into play, maintaining optimal blood glucose control is a constant juggling act—24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Students with diabetes should check their blood glucose levels throughout the day using a blood glucose meter and/or a sensor if prescribed. The meter gives a reading of the level of glucose in the blood at the time it is being monitored. When blood glucose levels are too low (hypoglycemia) or too high (hyperglycemia), students need to take corrective actions. Low blood glucose levels, which can be life-threatening, present the greatest immediate danger to people with diabetes.