

# How does type 1 (juvenile) diabetes affect students?

**Type 1 diabetes is an autoimmune disease in which the body's immune system attacks and destroys the insulin-producing cells in the pancreas. It strikes children suddenly, makes them insulin dependent for life, and carries the constant threat of devastating complications.**

Students with type 1 diabetes must take at least two insulin shots each day or use an insulin pump, and test their blood sugar by pricking their finger six or more times per day. The disease is difficult to manage and requires constant attention and a rigorous regimen including a strict meal plan and exercise program.

While insulin keeps children with type 1 diabetes alive, it is not a cure nor does it prevent its devastating effects: kidney failure, blindness, nerve damage, amputations, heart attack and stroke.

As many as three million Americans have type 1 diabetes. Each year over 13,000 children are diagnosed with diabetes. That's 35 children each and every day.

**Ask students who have type 1 diabetes.  
It's difficult. It's upsetting. It's life threatening. It doesn't go away.**

*"Every day, I have to endure up to six injections of insulin and more than ten finger pricks to keep me alive. When my blood sugar is high, my head hurts, I feel angry and sad, and it's hard to concentrate. When my blood sugar is low, I am dizzy, shaky, and in danger of becoming unconscious."*

—Emma Melton, age 17

*"My twin sister, Ashley, and I have had diabetes since we were 2 ½. It has been really tough, but we've made it this far. We have to prick our fingers 10-12 times per day. That totals up to 4,015 finger pricks in one year. We have had diabetes for 9 years, that's 36,135 finger pricks we have had in our lives."*

—Maddie McFeeley, age 11

*"I wear my insulin pump all day long even when I'm at school and sleeping at night. When I play basketball I wear a special harness so it is strapped to my back and won't fall off. I have to check my blood sugar before each meal including lunch when I'm at school. There is never a break from diabetes."*

—Sydney Busch, age 13

*"I already have problems with my kidneys, and I take medicine every day so my kidneys won't fail. I worry about what will happen if a cure isn't found soon."*

—LaNiece Evans-Scott, age 11

