

HOW TO HANDLE T1D QUESTIONS / INQUISITIVE PEOPLE

Source: Talking T1D: How to communicate about your type 1 diabetes

<http://www.jdrf.org/swo/wp-content/uploads/sites/12/2016/01/Talking-T1D.pdf>

Why do you need this info?

- Plan for unexpected conversations (like with clueless strangers) and for conversations with people that have a significant role in your life (like coworkers or extended family)

Situations where this information will be helpful:

- School – Administration, teachers, students, parents
- Work – HR, manager, co-worker
- New people in your life – new friends, roommates, dates
- Day-to-day life – running errands cashier asks about your ‘pager’, grocery store, travel, etc.

How to plan your responses:

- SET GOALS: Identify what you want from the conversation:
 - Educate others for more understanding
 - Alert others to symptoms if help needed
 - Increase intimacy in relationship
 - Make accommodations to manage your work
- BE AUTHENTIC: Be honest with yourself. Recognize and name your feelings with T1D and others. Tell others how you feel.
 - “This is personal for me” or “I hesitate bringing it up because I don’t want people to worry”
- START SMALL: You don’t have to give the whole medical explanation of T1D. Assess the person and your situation for how much to share and discuss.
 - “Do you have a few minutes?” or “Does that make sense?”
- RELATE TO OTHERS: Start with something the other person is talking about or understands and then move into T1D topic from there.
 - “I liked working out with you today. My blood sugar didn’t go low” or “I had to do that report today too. I needed to get a snack during it because of my blood sugar going low”
- USE FACTS & HUMOR: Include the necessary information for your objective and pepper in some humility and humor to lighten the situation if needed.
 - “I’ll send you a link so you can read more if you want” or “I always carry snacks, so let me know if you get hungry!”
- MAKE THE ASK: Keep it simple and direct and make sure you speak to your goal.

- “If I pass out, please call 911 and tell them I have diabetes” or “I take insulin to manage my blood sugar for food, stress, exercise. I count my carbs so I can make the right insulin dose. I need you to trust that I know what I am doing”
- ASK FOR HELP: Reach out when you need to talk about it. Contact a doctor, diabetes educator, local support group or friend.

Other ways to prepare how to talk about T1D:

- Create an elevator speech: Plan what you would say to someone about you and diabetes in 30 seconds or less.
 - “I have type 1 diabetes. My body doesn’t produce insulin at all, so I have to take insulin when I eat or if my blood sugar is high, and I have to eat carbs when my blood sugar goes low. I can’t just exercise more or do a low-carb diet.”
- Think about delivery: How will your conversation come across?
 - Tone (casual, formal or in-between)
 - Saying “I” rather than “you” is helpful and doesn’t feel defensive
 - Will you address your audience in a letter, in person, email, etc?