



COVID-19 + Back to School

Your Most Frequently Asked Questions, Answered

Transitioning back to school or early childhood education can feel overwhelming for parents, educators and caregivers, and students themselves. We asked experts in endocrinology, pediatrics and nursing, as well as representatives from the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC), American Diabetes Association (ADA) and the Sansum Diabetes Research Institute to answer some of your most frequently asked questions so that families with loved ones with T1D have a successful and safe school year.

A couple of things to keep in mind:

- Having T1D does NOT make you more susceptible to contracting COVID-19.
- Those at the greatest risk are people with consistently elevated blood-sugar levels and those with a second comorbidity, such as obesity or heart, kidney or lung disease.
- Feeling sick? It is crucial to carefully monitor your blood glucose and ketones more often than usual, as often as every four hours.
- Check jdrf.org/coronavirus for a full list of COVID-related information, resources and more.

Are students with T1D at higher risk for contracting COVID-19?

There is not any evidence to suggest children with T1D, particularly at a young age, with hopefully well-controlled glucose monitoring and appropriate insulin dosing, are immune compromised in any way. They are not likely to get sicker from COVID-19 itself, but could get sick if diabetes is not properly managed. Because of this, it is very important to diligently manage your diabetes if you are infected.

What are the current guidelines for social distancing in schools?

The CDC no longer requires masks to be worn in schools, but it is still recommended, especially for schools in communities with high COVID-19 levels. COVID-19 community levels can be found by county on the CDC website. Regarding social distancing, there are no physical guidelines however, it is recommended to limit the number of people that students come in contact with throughout the day. It is also important to maintain proper hand hygiene and stay home when experiencing symptoms or when testing positive for COVID-19.

Can my child get vaccinated against COVID-19?

The CDC recommends everyone aged 6 months and older get vaccinated against COVID-19. Additionally, the CDC recommends everyone aged 5 years and older get a COVID-19 booster. Clinical trials and ongoing safety monitoring show that the COVID-19 vaccination is safe for children and teens.

Will my child still have legal protection?

The rights of students with diabetes do not change—and they do not go away—during the global pandemic. No matter the model (full time remote; in-person attendance, or a hybrid), accommodations should stay in place for students with T1D. These can be everything from allowing for extra absences or tardies for students with T1D; blood glucose monitoring at any time, any place; or needing to take a test at an alternate time if a student is experiencing blood glucose levels that are out of range at test time.

504 Plan

In the United States, schools that receive federal funds are mandated by Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 to deliver “free appropriate education” to children with disabilities, including T1D.

A 504 Plan is a legal (written) document specifying what “reasonable” modifications and accommodations the school must provide for a student with a disability (generally put into place for a student with a medical disability such as diabetes). Children with T1D are protected under this law. For more information, visit www.jdrf.org/school

How should schools train for safety?

Schools should work with local public health officials to determine the prevention strategies needed in their area by monitoring levels of community transmission, vaccine coverage, and testing, to detect cases in K-12 schools. Some key points include, the need to be trained well in advance of the start of the school year. This should include care of the student with chronic health conditions such as diabetes. Schools need to make sure they have the personal protective equipment (PPE) they need. PPE use and safety measures should include face covering use in different environments (for example, classroom versus playground), hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette (what do you do when you cough, for example).

Where can I learn more?

For additional school resources for both families and educators, please visit jdrf.org/school.

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For additional JDRF T1D resources and support visit jdrf.org/t1d-resources

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