

ASK EXPERT: Understanding Diabetes in Children (Type 1)



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Diabetes is disorder characterized by high blood glucose levels, this can occur when the production, supply or action of the hormone insulin produced by beta cells of pancreas gets reduced or stopped in our body. Insulin is required by the body to use glucose (the simple sugar) the basic energy giving element to which most foods are broken down to by our digestive system. We all need insulin to grow and live.

Diabetes in children

The symptoms of type 1 diabetes in children usually develop very quickly. The symptoms of diabetes are increased thirst and appetite, frequent urination or restart of bed wetting, unexplained weight loss and fatigue, sudden changes in vision or blurred vision, frequent bladder and skin infections in children. If these symptoms are noticed in children one must visit the doctor and get the child tested for diabetes. children with diabetes may die without being diagnosed as the symptoms of diabetes in children resemble symptoms of common acute medical conditions encountered in many developing countries (e.g. acute gastroenteritis, because of severe dehydration, or cerebral malaria, because of loss of consciousness). Timely diagnosis and appropriate treatment are essential for child to live a near normal life with diabetes.

Why should type1 diabetes be identified and treated quickly?

If the diagnosis or treatment is delayed for any reason, the severe lack of insulin can result in a condition called diabetic ketoacidosis (DKA). With progressive insulin deficiency, there is breakdown of fat for energy; this in turn leads to the production of ketones. Ketones cause a sweet smell on the breath, vomiting, abdominal pain and rapid or acidotic

breathing. Later, the child will become drowsy and have an altered level of consciousness. And if it is not treated, it can lead to coma and death. Everyone with type 1 diabetes requires insulin from the beginning. Even though type1 diabetes is a chronic & progressive disorder, it has been shown that, if properly treated, children with type 1 diabetes can grow like normal individuals, be productive, fertile and live long.

Indian Scenario

It is estimated that there are more than 75,000 children living with diabetes in India. The impact of diabetes is very huge especially, when it strikes in childhood or adolescence. There is proof that many children die shortly after diagnosis and those who eventually survive are poorly controlled and have a poor quality of life. Healthcare, in India, is primarily financed through out-of-pocket payments by households and since taking care of type 1 diabetes is continuous and expensive, many children may lose their lives because of no or inadequate treatment

Changing Diabetes in Children

In an attempt to address the critical gap in the management of Diabetes in India, Novo Nordisk Education Foundation, in collaboration with the International Society for Paediatric and Adolescent Diabetes (ISPAD) and Roche have launched Changing Diabetes in Children (CDiC) program with the objective of giving children with type 1 diabetes less than 18 years and below the poverty line, access to comprehensive diabetes care and management. The 4000 children registered in the program are provided with free insulin, diagnostic tests, glucose monitoring and diabetes education.

In addition to the above, the program also envisages creating awareness about diagnosis and management of type 1 diabetes among society and amongst primary/secondary health care providers as there is an acute shortage of high calibre specialist health care providers (HCP) in India.

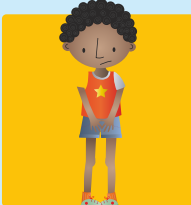
Under CDiC program, more than 1700 HCPs including diabetes educators have been trained. A training manual prepared by ISPAD on Diabetes Management in the children and adolescents has been distributed to more than 2000 HCPs. Apart from this, efforts are on through poster campaigns to reach out to more people especially

changing diabetes® in children



Know the diabetes warning signs

Contact a doctor or nurse if your child exhibits any of these signs



Frequent urination



Weight loss



Lack of energy or very tired all the time



Excessive thirst

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ISPAD
International Society for Paediatric
and Adolescent Diabetes



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school teachers to create awareness on this debilitating disorder in children. The primary objective of these campaigns is to get timely diagnosis and avoid serious complications in these children. So that they can lead a near normal life with proper understanding on the disorder and good care.

Every year 14th Nov is celebrated as World Diabetes Day. On this day, Sir Frederick Grant Banting, one of the primary discoverers of insulin was born. This world diabetes day, CDiC initiative plans to involve more than 4000 children with diabetes through various activities. We also plan to spread awareness about diabetes in children through in school campaign, "Taking Diabetes to school".

If you would like to have more information on type 1 diabetes you can write to us at -

Diabetes Educator
Novo Nordisk Education Foundation
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