

Going through puberty can be hard enough, but add in diabetes and it's one of the most challenging times for the parent-child relationship. Hormonal changes may make blood sugar management more difficult, while emotional changes may have adolescents not want to deal with diabetes altogether. Here are a few things to keep in mind to help navigate this challenging time.

Listen to and acknowledge their feelings - Puberty is a time where no one wants to stand out and diabetes may make them feel different. Check in with your child regularly. Let them share their feelings and acknowledge what they may be going through. Acknowledge that having diabetes at this age is hard and let them know when they are doing a good job.

Give them more independence with diabetes care - With puberty, comes a desire for independence and that also applies to diabetes. Together decide on the specific tasks they can take responsibility for in their diabetes care.

Stay involved - While adolescents want more responsibility, they are not yet ready for complete control. The research shows that parental involvement is associated with better diabetes management and better metabolic control among this age group.

Help them learn from their mistakes - In their quest for independence, they will make mistakes such as not checking blood sugars and missed boluses. Be understanding and help them to learn the changes they need to make for the future.

Connect with other adolescents with diabetes - Find opportunities for them to connect with others. Children with Diabetes offers an annual conference where they can meet and talk with other kids who may be having similar experiences.

Seek a counselor if needed - Diabetes is stressful. If diabetes is becoming a source of division between you, contact a counselor. Check with your doctor for a referral.

Updated 2/17/19

Disclaimer: This document is not intended to take the place of the care and attention of your personal physician or other professional medical services. Our aim is to promote active participation in your care and treatment by providing information and education. Questions about individual health concerns or specific treatment options should be discussed with your physician.

Sources

[Teen Toolkit — JDRF](#)

[Care of Children and Adolescents With Type 1 Diabetes — ADA](#)

[Parental Involvement in Adolescents' Diabetes Management — ADA](#)

Research Articles

[Psychological issues in the care of children and adolescents with type 1 diabetes — NIH](#)
