

# TOPIC: Understanding Diabetes

January 2017

Micro Training Course Developed by Kimberly Mouriquand, Family Support Specialist for the  
Alaska Center for Resource Families

## INSTRUCTIONS FOR FOSTER PARENT TRAINING CREDIT:

- \*Read through this self-study and view video*
- \*Fill out the "CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING" Questionnaire*
- \*Return to ACRF for 1.0 hour of training credit.*

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES In completing this course, you should be able to:

- Identify what diabetes is and know the difference between type 1 and type 2.
- Identify the risk factors for and the signs of diabetes in children and adolescents.
- Know when there are symptoms of problems.
- Know the treatment options for diabetes in youth and the requirements as a licensed foster parent when seeking testing and treatment of the disorder.

## BEGIN COURSE:

### View Video:

What is Diabetes? Watch this 11 minute video for an explanation. [What is Diabetes?](#)

### Read this short course:

With the diagnosis of diabetes in children and teens on the rise, resources and information specific to children and adolescents are beginning to make an appearance for caregivers and youth alike. In 2012, researchers from the SEARCH for Diabetes in Youth study found there was a 21% increase in diabetes diagnosis for youth ages 10-19 between 2001 and 2009. They also released data showing more than 19,000 children have type 2 diabetes and more than 168,000 have type 1 diabetes.

## Risk Factors and Warning Signs

While there is no known cause for type 1 and type 2 diabetes, there are risk factors associated with a type 2 diagnosis. Some of those risk factors include: being overweight, being sedentary, having family members who are also diagnosed with type 2 diabetes, and high blood pressure. Research has also shown a higher risk of type 2 diabetes in youth who are of African American, Hispanic, American Indian and Asian American descent.

For both type 1 and type 2 diabetes, some of the warning signs can include increased thirst, frequent urination, and fatigue. It's also important to be aware if children have increased hunger or if they start to report blurred vision. Other signs can include weight loss, slow healing of sores and cuts, itchy skin, dry mouth, numbness or tingling in hands or feet, and irritability or unusual behavior. For girls, the development of a yeast infection is also a warning sign.

Signs of type 1 diabetes in children tend to develop rapidly over a period of weeks. Conversely, children exhibiting signs of type 2 diabetes may experience more mild symptoms over a period of time, like months or years, prior to detection. Ultimately though, any change in the behavior of a child in your care should be noted, monitored, and discussed with the child's physician.

## Symptoms of Problems

Youth who diabetic can experience problems, even when managing their diabetes appropriately. Low blood sugar, or hypoglycemia, happens when there is not enough glucose in the blood. It's important to be aware of and teach youth who have diabetes the symptoms of low blood sugar, as leaving it untreated can lead to seizures and loss of consciousness. According to the Mayo Clinic, symptoms of low blood sugar include: sweating, shakiness, drowsiness, hunger, dizziness, irritability, headaches, dramatic behavior changes, confusion, and loss of consciousness. It's important to note also, the following signs of low blood sugar are often mistaken as alcohol intoxication in teens: lethargy, confusion or agitation, seizure, and loss of consciousness.

High blood sugar, or hyperglycemia, happens when there is an excess amount of glucose in the blood. The Mayo Clinic lists the following things to watch for: frequent urination, increased thirst, dry mouth, blurred vision, yeast infection, fatigue, and nausea.

Diabetic ketoacidosis is a problem that can arise from the mismanagement of diabetes. Diabetic ketoacidosis occurs when the body begins to break down fat cells for energy causing toxic acids called ketones to be present in the body. Signs and symptoms, according to the Mayo Clinic, include: loss of appetite, nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain, dry or flushed skin, a sweet, fruity smell on the breath, confusion, difficulty breathing, and exhaustion.

## Treatment Options

For anyone diagnosed with type 1 diabetes, injectable insulin is the only option for lowering blood sugar. There are four types of insulin for treatment: rapid acting, short acting, long acting and intermediate acting insulin. Depending on the child's needs, their physician will work to decide what type of insulin(s) will be best to help them manage the disorder.

For anyone diagnosed with type 2 diabetes, treatment options can include diet, exercise, oral medications, and depending on the progression of the disease, insulin treatment.

## What to do as a Foster Parent

If you suspect a youth in your care may be diabetic, you should make an appointment with the child's physician as soon as possible. Ask the physician about what type of tests may be run during the visit; specifically ask if they will be doing any tests on urine and blood. Notify the child's protective services specialist (PSS) of your concern the youth may have diabetes and inform them of the date, time and contact information for the provider you will be taking the child to see. Request from the PSS if any special permissions from him/her are needed to complete the tests the physician has let you know may be run.

Once you have a formal diagnosis, be sure to communicate this to the PSS, as well as your child's school/daycare provider or anyone else working with the youth who needs to be aware of his diagnosis for safety. Work with the child's physician to create a plan for care. Remember, per statutes and regulations, you must first obtain written permission for the administration of prescription medication from the child's legal guardian and you may only administer prescription medication and special medical procedures in the dosage, at the intervals, or in the manner prescribed by a physician.

For More information, GO TO [REFERENCES](#).

To Earn 1.0 Hour Foster Parent Training Credit (Alaska Foster Parents Only) COMPLETE [QUESTIONNAIRE](#)