

Planning and preparing for university – Checklist

Starting university is an exciting time in life and diabetes doesn't need to get in the way. This toolkit gives you further information and tips on managing your type 1 diabetes when moving away to university.

As you enter this important stage, think about any preparation and planning that could help you manage your type 1 diabetes more easily when you leave home.

University may be the first time that you live independently, so it might be a good idea to start thinking about managing a few aspects of your type 1 yourself before you head off. Here are a few things to think about:

1. If your healthcare is under the children's team, think of moving up to adult services around 1 year prior to university. Planning should start earlier for you to be familiar with the process of moving up. Please see our website [for more information](#)
2. Be proactive and get more involved in the day-to-day management of your type 1 diabetes (if you're not already) e.g. attending consultations alone (at least initially part of clinic visits), ordering prescriptions etc
3. UCAS form and notifying your university's student support in your university application
 - a. Tick the box for "disability" on your UCAS application form to let the university student support know that you have a long term medical condition in order to get appropriate support
 - b. Financial support: you may wish to apply for disability student allowance (DSA)
 - c. Arrangement insulin storage facility – e.g. mini fridge in your accommodation
 - d. There may be different types of accommodation available to you at university, including halls of residence, privately-rented accommodation and catered or self-catered accommodation. Some people find the idea of cooking for themselves stressful whereas others prefer to be more in control of what they eat

4. Up-skilling your diabetes self-management (see separate sessions)
 - a. Carb counting skills - try to experiment with various foods, learn some survival cooking skills
 - b. Alcohol
 - c. Exercise
 - d. Travelling
 - e. Driving
 - f. Sex and contraception
 - g. Hypos
 - h. Sick day management - managing high ketones
 - i. Take an independent role in managing your diabetes (if you haven't already done so) - how to order prescriptions, needles, insulin pens etc
 - j. It will be a good time to brush up your diabetes self-management education including carb counting skills. You could consider attending structured education during the summer before university, such as the DAFNE (Dose Adjustment for Normal Eating) training course. Hospital specific variants of DAFNE do exist so please speak to your healthcare team regarding courses available in your area. These courses look at working out how much insulin you need to take for what you want to eat. It covers carbohydrate counting, blood glucose and ketone monitoring, insulin regimens, eating out, reading food labels, hypos, illness and exercise. Talk to your healthcare team for more details

5. Order prescriptions to make sure you have everything you need. Plan ahead and get into the habit of checking your supplies regularly. Make sure you have supplies of:
 - a. Insulin (both background and quick insulin)
 - b. Insulin pens and needles
 - c. Sharp containers or needle clipper
 - d. If you are an insulin pump user: insulin pump, syringes, needles, infusion set, batteries, spare insulin pens, plasters, a written copy of your basal insulin rate, insulin to carb ratio and insulin sensitivities. Discuss funding arrangement with your diabetes team. You should also consider getting pump insurance (if you don't already have this)
 - e. Blood glucose meter and test strips
 - f. Ketone meters and test strips
 - g. Lancing device and lancet
 - h. Hypokit- e.g., glucose tablets, jelly babies, Glucogel and snacks
 - i. Aid for carb counting - app on your smart phone or carb counting book
 - j. Books to record your glucose levels, food, activities, insulin dose etc
 - k. Emergency contact detail of your diabetes team; program them into your phone. Most smartphones allow you to record a medical condition to show on the 'emergency' button on the lock screen. You may like to use this function to record information about your type 1. On an iPhone, this is edited in the Health app, under Medical ID. On an android, you can edit the owner info in your settings
 - l. A diabetes ID can literally be life-saving (especially after a few drinks)! Several companies (such as MedicAlert and Medi-Tag) offer a great range of ID products which look just like jewellery or a watch strap; no one needs to know it's an ID bracelet

6. You might want to tell your healthcare team about your plans for the future and see what advice they have. Discuss clinic follow up arrangements while you're at university:
 - a. Agree on whether you would like healthcare transferred or continue with your usual diabetes team
 - b. Note down your diabetes nurse and consultant's contact numbers and or email addresses and ask them how you can contact them at university
 - c. Request flexible appointments during holiday times
 - d. Ask your healthcare team for copies of correspondence to the GP that include your current diabetes treatment plan and recent test reports - HbA1c, eye, feet check, kidney function, urine for albumin (protein) and any specific issues you may have
 - e. Ask your healthcare team whether they have a remote computer system (such as diasend) where you can upload your blood glucose reading from your meter so that your diabetes team can remotely review them

7. Research about how to register with GPs on your university campus site or a nearby GP.