

DIABETES: A GUIDE FOR TENNIS VENUES & WORKFORCE

WHAT IS DIABETES?

Diabetes is a serious condition where your blood glucose (also known as blood sugar) level is too high. This could be because your body doesn't produce enough insulin, the insulin it produces isn't effective, or your body can't produce any insulin at all.

There are two main types of Diabetes: Type 1 and Type 2.

WHAT IS TYPE 1 DIABETES?

In type 1 diabetes where the cells in the pancreas which usually make insulin are attacked by the immune system and destroyed. Your body still breaks down the carbohydrate from food and drink and turns it into glucose. But when the glucose enters your bloodstream, there's no insulin to allow it into your body's cells. More and more glucose then build up in your bloodstream, leading to high blood sugar levels.

WHAT IS TYPE 2 DIABETES?

In type 2 diabetes the body either can't make enough insulin or the insulin it does make doesn't work properly. Much like type 1, your body still breaks down the carbohydrates you eat and drink. Then, the pancreas responds to this by releasing insulin. However, because this insulin can't work properly, your blood sugar levels keep rising. This means more insulin is released.

For some people with type 2 diabetes this can eventually tire the pancreas out, meaning their body makes less and less insulin. This can lead to even higher blood sugar levels and mean you are at risk of hyperglycaemia.

FACTS:

4.3 MILLION

people are now living with a diagnosis of diabetes in the UK (2022)

APPROX 8%

of people with diabetes in the UK have Type 1 diabetes

APPROX 90%

of people with diabetes in the UK have Type 2 diabetes

OVER 2.4M

people are at an increased risk of Type 2 diabetes in the UK based on blood sugar levels

850,000

people are estimated by Diabetes UK to currently live with Type 2 diabetes but are yet to be diagnosed

GENERAL INFORMATION

Glucose & Insulin

We all need glucose to create energy, we create this energy by our bodies breaking down the carbohydrates that we eat or drink and this creates glucose. The glucose is then released into our bloodstream and transported to the parts of our body that need it the most. For people who have diabetes, their body may not have the ability to use glucose effectively and so the glucose builds up in the bloodstream, causing spikes in blood sugar levels. We need a hormone called insulin to move the glucose from our blood into our cells so it can be used for energy.

What are the symptoms of diabetes?

The symptoms of diabetes (high blood glucose levels) include:

- Going to the toilet a lot to pass urine
- Feeling extremely thirsty
- Unintentional weight loss
- Being very tired
- Blurred vision
- Recurrent genital itching or thrush
- Wounds and cuts taking longer to heal

www.diabetes.org.uk/diabetes-the-basics/diabetes-symptoms

Consistently high blood sugars can lead to a condition called diabetic ketoacidosis (DKA). This happens when there is a severe lack of insulin and the body can't use glucose for energy, so it starts to breakdown other body tissue as an alternative energy source. Ketones are the by-product and are poisonous chemicals which can build up and cause the body to become acidic.

www.diabetes.org.uk/guide-to-diabetes/complications/diabetic_ketoacidosis

Hypoglycaemia (hypos)

Low blood sugars (hypos) are a side effect of insulin and some other medications that people with diabetes take. Whilst it is more common for people with type 1 diabetes to have hypos, they can also occur in some people with type 2 or other types of diabetes. A hypo is when blood sugars are 4mmol/l or less.

Certain things make hypos more likely; these include:

- Missing or delaying a meal or snack
- Not having enough carbohydrate at the last meal
- Doing a lot of exercise without having extra carbohydrate or without reducing insulin dose
- Taking more insulin (or certain diabetes medication) than needed
- Drinking alcohol on an empty stomach.

WHAT EQUIPMENT MIGHT A PERSON WITH DIABETES USE?

Testing glucose levels:



Blood glucose monitor: a handheld device which comes with a lancet to prick your finger to draw a small amount of blood, a digital display and place to insert test strips.



Flash glucose monitor:
[Flash glucose monitoring | Diabetes UK](#)



Continuous glucose monitor:
[Continuous glucose monitoring \(CGM\) | Diabetes UK](#)

Hypoglycaemia (hypos, continued)

The symptoms of a hypo might include:

- Trembling
- Sweating whilst not exercising
- Fast pulse/palpitations
- Anxiety
- Irritable
- Headaches
- Blurred sight
- Going pale
- Tingling in lips
- Tiredness/lack of concentration/confusion

A person with diabetes will usually treat their hypo themselves by eating or drinking some fast acting carbohydrate, but in the case of an emergency speak with the first aider at your venue.

SEVERE HYPOS AND WHAT TO DO

If someone is having a severe hypo, where they may be drowsy and confused or become unconscious or have a fit, you will need to take immediate action.

DO NOT give anything by mouth as they won't be able to swallow.

Take action, quickly:

- **Put them into the recovery position** (on their side, with their head tilted back and knees bent)
- **If you have been trained, give a glucagon injection** (you don't have to be trained, but someone like a friend may have been trained)
- **Call an ambulance** - especially if you don't have a glucagon injection or they haven't recovered in 10 mins after the injection

If someone has had a severe hypo, they should avoid all exercise for at least 24 hours after.

WHAT EQUIPMENT MIGHT A PERSON WITH DIABETES USE?

Insulin delivery:



Insulin pens: a pen type device that is used to inject insulin.



Insulin pumps: a small electronic device attached to the body via a cannula which delivers insulin regularly throughout the day and night.



HOW CAN YOU SUPPORT PLAYERS WITH DIABETES?

- **Create an open dialogue about diabetes:** Create a comfortable environment for players to openly discuss their daily experience with diabetes if they want to, allowing you to better understand their needs and provide necessary support.
- **Educate others at your venue:** Promote open discussions about diabetes with everyone at the venue to enhance their awareness of its importance. This will create a supportive environment where your team feels at ease asking questions and helping when needed.
- **Don't single the player out:** If you need to speak to your player about their diabetes then do so in private. They may choose to speak openly about it, and have you support them by informing others at your venue or they may choose to deal with it privately.
- **End the stigma:** Offer education and establish a welcoming space for open conversations about diabetes, dismantling the misconception that players with diabetes are limited in their performance. These players can excel with proper preparation, such as having insulin and fast-acting glucose on hand. Address concerns about non-selection to ensure they feel comfortable sharing their experiences.
- **Creating safe environments:** Ensure secure and sanitary spaces for players to manage injections and adjust wearable technology, enhancing their pre-match and pre-training routines. Keep fast-acting glucose readily available in medical bags and changing rooms to promote a sense of acceptance and safety among players.
- **Adapt:** Your sessions can impact on the way your player's blood glucose levels respond. If you're going to adapt your sessions from time to time, inform the player as to whether they'll be moderate or higher intensity, as it can help with their preparation. Your player will work out their own routine for training and matches. Remember, people's experience of diabetes won't always be the same. Therefore, always have a person-centred approach when supporting a player with diabetes.

USEFUL RESOURCES AND LINKS

- [Diabetes and exercise | Type 1 and type 2 | Diabetes UK](#)
- [JDRF:](#)
 - [Type 1 Diabetes charity](#)
 - [Activity page](#)
- [Type 1 Diabetes](#)
- [Type 2 Diabetes](#)
- [We Are Undefeatable campaign](#)

CONTACT US FOR MORE INFO

For further information on diabetes please contact the LTA Disability Development team:

Email: disabilitytennis@lta.org.uk

Please visit: www.lta.org.uk

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