

T1D and Sleepovers

Slumber parties are a very important event in childhood. Slumber parties have traditions like eating unhealthy food, being silly and spending time with friends. They also give your child chance to create memories with friends outside of school.

As a parent of someone with type one diabetes, the idea of having them attend a slumber party can be nerve-racking. You can't help but worry about challenges that could arise, and how they'd be handled while your child is out of your care. With some planning, slumber parties can be a successful experience for you, your child, and the host parent.



Prep and tips for a successful sleepover

The sleepover host may decide that they're not comfortable with this responsibility, or you may determine that they are not ready to take this on. Prepare your child, they may feel sad, embarrassed or mad at their friend or parent. Diabetes can be overwhelming, explain this to your child and be supportive. Have a backup plan; a family fun night may just be the fix.

- **If the family is on board, set up a time to demonstrate how your child's insulin dispensing and monitoring devices work.** This may also ease everyone anxiety and fears. It's much better if this takes place before the day of the party. You don't want to risk making your child nervous or embarrassed. Educating before the party will also allow the host family to understand details which could be overlooked if done while other parents are dropping off their children and especially with a house full of excited children.
- **Find out what food they are planning to serve.** If your child doesn't have restrictions with their diet, reassure the host that special food isn't necessary. Explain that your child can eat whatever they likes as long as they adjust their insulin doses to the carbohydrates they consume. If your child is unable to calculate carbohydrates have the host or your child contact you for dosing guidance.
- **Have a trial run before the slumber party.** Have a play date. See if your child can have a play date prior to the party, this will make the host feel more comfortable taking care of your child. Your child should demonstrate the ability to monitor their blood glucose levels by checking their blood sugar or being able to monitor their CGM information independently. Leave behind the set of written instructions you reviewed.

- **Pack those diabetes supplies in a child friendly bag.** Some children don't want to share their diagnosis with friends and may not want to call attention to medical supplies in a medically marked kit. Try packing supplies in non-medical bag. A FRIO diabetes insulated case or another insulated device (available online) can store insulin at a proper temperature for 24 hours.
- **Reassure a nervous child that you are available at any time for an unplanned pick-up.** Make sure your child and the host parents know that you can be contacted at any time during the event if there is a problem or if your child wants to come home.
- **Anticipate problems and plan accordingly.** Make the family aware of what low blood sugar looks like and the symptoms to watch out for (shakiness, confusion, sleepiness, etc.). If blood sugar numbers aren't looking good at bedtime you may want to pick up your child rather than ask the host parents to check blood sugar in the middle of the night. You can always bring them back in time for breakfast in the morning.

What to pack:

- ✓ A blood glucose meter or CGM receiver
- ✓ Extra batteries for meter and/or pump
- ✓ Ketone test strips with instructions on how and when to use
- ✓ Low blood sugar fast acting snacks; glucose tablets, juice, fruit snacks. Also include protein carb snacks
- ✓ Insulin (unopened insulin should be packed in an insulated bag)
- ✓ Extra syringes and insulin if your child uses a pump in the event of a pump failure
- ✓ The personal data manager (PDM) if using a pump
- ✓ Charger for their continuous monitor and /or pump
- ✓ Glucagon/Baqsimi/GVoke kit (with instructions on how to use in case of a low blood sugar emergency).

