
Safe at School[®]: Emergency Lockdown Preparation

As parents, you know that diabetes management is 24/7. The safety and health of your child at school depend on access to care, diabetes supplies and equipment, and trained school personnel. While no one wants a school emergency plan to ever be put into action, it is important to work with your child's school to develop a plan for how your child's diabetes needs will be managed in a practice emergency drill or in the event of a school emergency or lockdown.

In the event of a lockdown situation where students need to stay in place in the gym, playground, library, classroom, or another area of the school, it is important to take a few steps to ensure your child will have access to their essential supplies and food. Schools must provide access to care, even in the event of an emergency. While there is no way to prepare for every situation perfectly and completely, proper and practical planning can help to ensure your child is as safe as possible.

Do your homework

Find out if your child's school or school district has a policy for practice emergency drills, lockdowns, and emergency evacuations and what provisions address the needs of students with chronic illness. Knowing this policy will enable you to better prepare for a practice drill or a real-life emergency.

Think through different scenarios with your child's school health team.

- Are your child's essential supplies always accessible to them?
- Will your child need to stay in place, or will all the children be sent to a central location?
- What happens if your child is en route to the restroom, the clinic, or in another area away from diabetes supplies?
- How will your child's device alerts and alarms be managed?
- Are there backup supplies such as an insulin pen, syringe and vial, and a meter in the event of device failure?

Identification

A wearable medical alert enables first responders and emergency workers to identify your child as having diabetes. Having visible identification will increase the chance of your child getting the care they need as quickly as possible.

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Self-management

You and your child's school should collaborate to transition your child to self-manage diabetes as appropriate based on age, maturity, and skill proficiency. Children who self-manage should be encouraged to carry their supplies on their person so they will have access in the event of a school lockdown or evacuation.

Education and awareness for teachers and school staff

All school staff responsible for your child should have a basic understanding of diabetes—including knowing the signs and symptoms of hypoglycemia (low blood glucose, also called low blood sugar) and how to get help.

School staff should know where your child's supplies and food are kept in the event of an emergency or lockdown and be able to access them.

Those expectations should also apply to substitute teachers. It is the responsibility of the school to keep them informed.

General considerations for supplies

Ideally, your child should always have access to food, water, a glucose meter, insulin, and the restroom. However, the **number one priority is access to treatment for hypoglycemia. A quick-acting carbohydrate such as glucose tabs or a juice box should always be kept in the classroom or with the student to treat hypoglycemia.** Water should always be available to the child to prevent dehydration that can occur with hyperglycemia (high blood glucose).

For children who do not self-manage and keep food and water on their person, the school may need to keep food and water in the classroom and other areas where the child may be in an emergency.

During a prolonged shelter-in-place or emergency evacuation, your child may need access to other supplies and help from trained staff.

- Necessary tools to check blood glucose (blood sugar) during a prolonged lockdown or emergency
 - o Children should continue to use their glucometer or continuous glucose monitor (CGM). For children with a CGM, a backup meter should always be available.
 - o Children who are independent in their management should always carry a meter. For younger children and children who do not self-manage, a meter should be stored in the clinic, at the teacher's desk, or somewhere else in the classroom. School staff should be prepared to help these children to check and monitor blood glucose.

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- Giving insulin during a prolonged lockdown or emergency
 - While the safest practice would be to have insulin always accessible, this may be difficult in a lockdown situation.
 - Children who self-manage may have insulin on their person (insulin pump or insulin pen). Students who use an insulin pump should have a backup system (pen or vial/syringe) available at school.
 - If the school nurse or other trained personnel is not available to assist a younger child with insulin or insulin is not available, the plan should be to reduce food intake and increase intake of water or non-carbohydrate-containing liquids.

In the event of an evacuation, find out which school staff member(s) is responsible for maintaining and transporting supplies.

Managing devices and alarms

During a lockdown, your child should continue to wear their devices, whether an insulin pump, CGM, or both. It is also advised to teach your child to silence any alarms to avoid attracting unwanted attention.

Written plans and school protocols

It is important to include a lockdown/emergency provision in your child's **Diabetes Medical Management Plan, Section 504 Plan, or Individualized Education Program (IEP)**. Work with your child's school or school district to develop a safe and practical plan that can be incorporated into its lockdown/emergency evacuation protocols and easily implemented if needed.

Learn more about Safe at School® [here](#).