



Information for Patients & Caregivers

WHAT TO KNOW ABOUT DIABETES IN SPECIAL SITUATIONS?

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+ DIABETES AND DRIVING

Diabetes and the medication used to treat it can impact your ability to drive.

The main risk with diabetes is the risk of having low blood sugar whilst driving which can lead to impaired brain function and disorientation.

However, diabetes can also affect your vision which may impact your ability to drive.

It is therefore important that you discuss whether you can drive safely with your doctor. You may also need to notify the driving licence authority that you have been diagnosed with diabetes.

Other ways to ensure your safety and that of other road users:

- Check your blood sugar before driving.
- Check again every 2 hours whilst driving long distances.
- If your blood sugar drops too low, drink fruit juice to raise your blood sugar, as advised by your healthcare provider.
- If you feel unwell whilst driving, pull over and seek assistance.

It is important to consider the safety of yourself and others when planning to drive. Don't drive if you don't feel well or your doctor advises against it.

+ DIABETES AT WORK

Whether or not diabetes will affect your ability to do your job depends on the type of work you do. If you operate heavy machinery or carry a firearm, having diabetes can make such work impossible.

See your doctor for advice on whether your work is likely to be affected by your diabetes. If that's the case, you may need to speak to your employer about what adjustments can be made to your work to accommodate the diabetes?

+ DIABETES AT SCHOOL

If your child has been diagnosed with diabetes, they will need to have their blood sugar level checked regularly throughout the day.

Your child's doctor will develop a Diabetes Medical Management Plan which is a document that sets out what care your child will require during the day and the types of foods and quantities that are safe to consume. The Plan document also details the danger symptoms to watch for and what to do if such symptoms develop.

It is important that the Plan document is shared with your child's school nurse and that the child's teacher is also aware of their needs. It is also important that you provide the necessary medication and related equipment that your child requires and is provided with a healthy meals and snacks for the school day.

Note: The central aim of diabetes care in children is to normalise their childhood as much as possible. All children with diabetes should therefore participate fully in physical activities, unless advised otherwise by the child's doctor.



To be diagnosed with diabetes can be a frightening or overwhelming experience.

If you have questions about why it developed, what it means for your long-term health, and how it will affect your everyday life, please speak to your doctor.



+ DIABETES AND RAMADAN

All patients with diabetes are considered exempt from fasting during Ramadan, on medical grounds. However, if your diabetes is well controlled and you have no complications, then it may be possible to fast.

You should see your doctor at least 8-12 weeks before Ramadan begins to determine whether it is safe for you to fast.

Your doctor will assess your level of risk and your healthcare provider will provide you with important information about diabetes and fasting. This will include advice on when to measure your blood sugar, what to eat, how much exercise you can do and how to adjust your medication.

The main risk of fasting is developing a low blood sugar as a result of fasting which can be dangerous. You should be prepared to break the fast if necessary, to prevent this from occurring. In severe cases a low blood sugar can lead to coma and even death.

+ DIABETES AND HAJJ

Performing Hajj can be very challenging even for people without diabetes. Having diabetes and performing the Hajj is associated with additional risks such as:

- Failing to manage your diabetes well due to disruption of mealtimes.
- Running out of medication.
- Getting access to medical services, when required.
- Aggravation of other medical conditions.
- Developing an illness during the Hajj.

If you become unwell whilst on Hajj, see a doctor immediately.

Meet your doctor before you travel for the Hajj to get advice on how to adjust your medication and to ensure you have everything you need for a safe Hajj.

Hajj can be demanding on your feet. As diabetes can lead to nerve damage that can affect the feet, it is therefore important to take extra care of your feet during the Hajj:

- Check your feet every day and after any exercise for signs of injury or infection.
- Moisturise your feet 2-3 times a day to prevent skin cracking but avoid moisturising between your toes.
- Avoid walking barefoot wherever possible and wear comfortable footwear that will not cause injury to your feet.
- If a foot injury occurs, seek medical help.

Symptoms of a low blood sugar level include:

- Sweating.
- Feeling anxious or confused.
- Shivering.
- Dizziness.

This can be dangerous but can be treated by drinking fruit juice or taking glucose tablets.

+ DIABETES AND DEMENTIA

Diabetes is associated with an increased risk of developing intellectual impairment in later life. This can complicate the management of diabetes and result in additional health problems.

If you aged over 65 years, your doctor will check whether you are showing any signs of intellectual impairment or dementia.

If you are diagnosed with dementia, your doctor will try to optimise your care whilst also simplifying your diabetes treatment to make it easier to follow. They may want to speak with your family to involve them in your care and make sure you are receiving the care you need.

+ DIABETES AND MENTAL HEALTH

Living with diabetes can be very emotionally demanding for you and your family. This in turn can lead to a poor quality of life and serious psychological problems such as depression and anxiety, which are common in people with diabetes.

If you are experiencing a persistent low mood or anxious, see your doctor for advice on what you can do yourself to cope with how you are feeling. Your doctor may decide to prescribe medication or refer you to a specialist for extra help.

+ DIABETES IN PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

Diabetes can be a particular problem in people with intellectual or physical disabilities.

If you have a disability, your doctor will try to find the best way to work around the disability. This may involve including your family or other caregivers in helping you to monitor your blood sugar or remembering to take your medication on time.

Your doctor will talk to you about what you understand about the diabetes and will emphasise the importance of leading a healthy lifestyle and taking your medication regularly.

If you have any concerns or questions, be sure to discuss these with your doctor.

+ ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Additional information on Diabetes in Special Situations, can be found in the National Clinical Guideline published by The Ministry of Public Health (MoPH) Qatar.

The guideline is available to the public from the MoPH website: www.moph.gov.qa

