



Taking control of type 1 diabetes

Type 1 diabetes is an autoimmune disease affecting around 300,000 Canadians. The number of new cases is rising by around 4.4% a year, with the greatest increase in children under the age of 5.

It is still not known exactly what causes type 1 diabetes, but research continues around the world to find both the cause and a cure.

Although type 1 diabetes cannot yet be cured, it can be well controlled. Management involves blood glucose monitoring and daily insulin, accompanied by regular medical check-ups. To date, this is the only treatment for type 1 diabetes.

At the Diabetes Clinic of the Montreal Children's Hospital, more than 1,000 families receive care and support. The clinic's mission is to help children with diabetes grow and thrive—both physically and emotionally. Families are supported by a multidisciplinary team that includes dedicated doctors, nurses and nutritionists, with additional support from a social worker and psychoeducator.

Support goes beyond the clinic walls. The team stays in close contact with families by phone, and nurses are available for questions or concerns as they come up. Every child sees their endocrinologist every three months.

Education is an ongoing part of the care—usually through one-on-one sessions with families or in small group meetings—because helping families understand diabetes is one of the most powerful tools we have.



Diabetes: its symptoms and treatment

What is diabetes?

Diabetes is a condition where the body doesn't produce enough insulin to regulate blood sugar levels.

What are the symptoms?

- frequent urination
- thirst
- fatigue
- weight loss
- stomach pain, nausea or vomiting
- rapid breathing
- fruit-scented breath



Children with diabetes must carry special identification with them at all times so they can get the right help if their diabetes is out of control.

Hypoglycemia

Children with diabetes who take insulin may also experience episodes of low blood sugar (hypoglycemia). These episodes are temporary and can be treated with fast-acting sugar.

What causes hypoglycemia?

- missing or delaying a meal
- intense physical activity without enough food
- too much insulin
- vomiting

A typical daily routine for managing type 1 diabetes includes:

- frequent blood sugar checks throughout the day
- multiple daily insulin injections
- regular, balanced meals
- use of technologies like insulin pumps or continuous glucose monitors (CGMs)
- regular blood and urine tests
- several visits each year to the Diabetes Clinic for monitoring and support.

