

Speech Notes for Primary School Assembly

Today I want to talk to you about DIABETES.

Diabetes is the name given to disorders in which the body has trouble regulating its blood-glucose, or blood-sugar, levels. There are two major types of diabetes: type 1 and type 2.

They are not the same!

Let's start with type 2 diabetes.

Type 2 diabetes is a disorder in which a person's body still produces insulin but is unable to use it effectively. You can get type 2 diabetes from being overweight and not having enough exercise, or if your parents have type 2 diabetes. Usually only grownups get it, but some children do too, so it is important to get into the habit of eating healthy food and enjoying plenty of exercise. Type 2 diabetes can usually be prevented.

Now let's talk about type 1 diabetes.

Around 11,000 kids in Australia have type 1 diabetes. Type 1 diabetes accounts for around 10% of all people with diabetes.

It is important to remember that you cannot catch type 1 diabetes. It's not caused by eating too much sugar or not exercising enough, and it is no one's fault if you do get it. Type 1 diabetes is what's called an autoimmune disease, in which the person's pancreas stops producing insulin. Insulin is a hormone that lets us get energy from the food we eat. Your body needs insulin to give you energy every day to run and play – and do your schoolwork!

Everyone in the world needs insulin to live.



So how does someone manage type 1 diabetes?

People with type 1 diabetes must carefully balance eating and other activities all the time. Every day and every night. They must give themselves insulin using an injection or a pump. If they are injecting insulin, they need up to 6 injections EVERY SINGLE DAY. This means they will check the amount of glucose in their blood up to 6 times a day by pricking their finger with a very sharp needle. Sometimes, if someone with type 1 diabetes doesn't have enough glucose in their blood, they can feel sick or faint. That's why you may see them eating sugary foods – like jelly babies.

In one year, a person with type 1 diabetes would have at least 730 injections and 1,460 finger pricks.

Breakthrough T1D supports research to cure, treat and prevent T1D. We're working hard to find a cure, while also finding ways to improve the lives of people with T1D right now.

What is it like to have type 1 diabetes?

Well it never goes away. You can NEVER go without treatment, NOT EVEN FOR ONE DAY. It can be hard, and sometime upsetting, and it never goes away. But at the same time, people with type 1 diabetes don't let it stand in the way of achieving their goals.

[Allow teacher, student or guest speaker with type 1 to speak.]

Breakthrough T1D helps raise money to help all the scientists around the world to do lots of research to find a cure for type 1 diabetes. This year, our school is going to help raise money for the scientists so they can find a cure for type 1 diabetes!

[Talk about your event, what your school goal is and any incentives for the students/school]