

What is Diabetes?

Life Without Barriers (LWB) provides disability support to people with diabetes.

¹ Diabetes is a serious health condition that can affect the whole body. When someone has diabetes, their body cannot keep the sugar in the blood at healthy levels. Sugar in the blood is called glucose, an important energy source for our bodies. If the glucose levels in the blood are not healthy, it can cause long-term and short-term health [problems](#).

When a person with diabetes eats foods containing sugar, starch and fibre, the glucose cannot be turned into energy. Instead, the glucose stays in the blood and causes high Blood Glucose Levels (BGL). After eating, the glucose moves around the body in the blood. Checking and managing blood glucose levels is important.

There are 2 main types of diabetes – [Type 1 Diabetes](#) and [Type 2 Diabetes](#).

To find helpful information about diabetes, self-care and treatment available, click on this link <https://www.diabetesaustralia.com.au/about-diabetes>.

All staff providing support with diabetes should complete the [LWB eLearning modules](#):

- Diabetes
- Blood Glucose Testing

Staff also need to complete training requirements such as:

- Training with AQHP on a person's Diabetes Management plan.
- For HIDPA activities such as administering diabetes medication by injection, staff also need to complete the Medication Administration training.

Supporting People with Diabetes

At Engagement

During the Engagement process, the person will be asked what support they want with their diabetes management.

The choices are:

1. The person will self-manage their diabetes and LWB will only provide general emergency response if required. Note: this option is limited to people receiving Lifestyle Support only.

¹ www.diabetesaustralia.com.au/what-is-diabetes

2. LWB staff will help support the person manage their diabetes. Staff must follow the instructions in the person's Diabetes Management Plan. The plan must be developed by their General Practitioner (GP) or Diabetes Educator.

Ketoacidosis

For someone with Type 1 diabetes, it's important to watch out for any signs of Ketoacidosis. Ketoacidosis is a condition caused when a person has a high blood sugar level, and not enough insulin in the body to break it down. This often happens when someone with type 1 diabetes is unwell.

Signs could include:

- Feel very thirsty
- Need to go to the bathroom often
- Feel sick in the stomach and vomiting
- Feel weak and tired
- Trouble breathing
- Breath smells fruity
- Confusion

Hypoglycaemia – HYPO

Hypoglycaemia (hypo) is when a person has diabetes and has too little glucose (sugar) in their blood. A blood glucose level lower than 4 mmol/L is considered hypoglycaemic.

Hypoglycaemia can affect different people in different ways.

Signs could include:

- trembling or shaking
- feeling weak
- feeling sweaty
- feeling dizzy or light-headed
- having a headache
- feeling tearful or crying
- feeling hungry
- having tingling lips, tongue or cheeks
- feeling that your heart is beating faster
- blurred vision
- feeling irritable or nervous

If a hypo gets more severe, signs could include:

- becoming confused
- finding it hard to concentrate

- having slurred speech
- behaving strangely or looking like they are drunk
- having a seizure
- becoming unconscious

Staff must follow a person's Diabetes Management Plan, which should include information on how to respond if the person has low blood sugar levels.

The [NDIS LWB 5646 Responding to Hypoglycaemia\(HYPO\) Flowchart](#) provides helpful advice on how to respond to low blood sugar (HYPO). This includes information about fast and slow-acting carbohydrates and guidance for helping people who need their food to be thickened or who are being fed through a tube.

The Diabetes Management Plan

The health professional writes what kind of support the person needs in a Diabetes Management Plan. The plan needs to explain:

- Diabetes diagnosis type
- Emergency management
- Blood Glucose Level Management – including responding to HYPO.
- Diet
- Sick Day Action
- Physical activity
- Diabetes Health Management Team members
- Plan sign-off

AQHP can add any extra items from the list above that are not in the AQHP plan template by including them in the additional notes section.

The GP or the diabetes educator can choose whichever plan format they think is best. The DSL will provide them with a copy of the [NDIS LWB 5509 Health Plans Essentials - Checklist](#), which will show them what to write in the plan so that the staff can safely provide their support.

If a GP or Diabetes Educator is not sure of where to find a plan template, they can visit [Diabetes Qualified](#). This website has many different plans to help manage diabetes.

Click here to learn more about [health and wellbeing plan templates](#).

During Service Delivery

Check

The Disability Support Worker will:

- Read the handover notes and staff communication folder for any information on changes to a person's health.
- Read and understand the person's Diabetes Management Plan.

- Look on the Disability Pathway [my wellbeing pages](#) and [HIDPA pages](#) for all the guidance you need to follow.
- Read and follow
 - [NDIS LWB 5501 Health and Wellbeing – Procedure](#)
 - [NDIS LWB 5558 Blood Glucose Level Testing – Procedure.](#)
 - [NDIS LWB 5644 HIDPA Administration of Diabetes Medication with Injector Pen – Procedure](#)
- Read and follow the [NDIS LWB 5507 Let's Talk About PPE](#) for correct PPE needs before doing any health and wellbeing support procedures.

The Disability Support Leader will:

- Make sure:
 - Staff rostered to support the person have completed all mandatory learning and training with an AQHP as needed.
 - The person's Diabetes Management Plan is up to date.
 - Any diabetes medication is written in the person's Medication Chart.
 - The person's dietary needs are written in their Mealtime Management Plan.
 - Risk and safeguarding needs relating to Diabetes are written in the person's [NDIS LWB 5001 Client Profile.](#)

Support**The Disability Support Worker will:**

- Complete any training needed to support the person before providing support.
- Sign the [NDIS LWB 5450 Support Plan – Staff Declaration](#) to record understand the person's plan.
- Understand and follow the person's Diabetes Management Plan.
- Understand and follow dietary needs in the person's Mealtime Management Plan.
- Understand when to call an ambulance / take action / provide PRN.
 - Staff must also watch the person's health using the CHECK SUPPORT REPORT approach and STOP AND WATCH. For more information, refer to the NDIS LWB 5050 Check Support Report Poster and the NDIS LWB 5501 Health and Wellbeing – Procedure. NDIS LWB 5558 Blood Glucose Level Testing – Procedure

NOTE: Giving insulin by injection is a HIDPA activity. Only trained staff can deliver this support. To learn more, see [HIDPA Subcutaneous Injections SharePoint page](#)

The Disability Support Leader will:

- Track the completion of staff training and make sure staff have signed the [NDIS LWB 5450 Support Plan – Staff Declaration.](#)
- Make sure:
 - the person sees their health professional at least every 3 months. The health professional may be a GP or diabetes educator. During these visits, the person's diabetes care is discussed. This includes their diet, medication and how often they need to check their BGL's.

- the person is supported to health appointments by staff and/or family who know them well and can provide information about their health and diabetes management or any dietary concerns during health reviews.
- the plan is written by a health professional who knows the person.
- the plan is reviewed at least once a year, or more often if the needs of the person change. Diabetes management plans can only be reviewed a maximum of six (6) times. After that a new plan **must** be written.
- the plan is checked by the health professional who created it. If they are not available, another health professional with the same qualifications can review it.

Report

The Disability Support Worker will:

- Sign the [NDIS LWB 5450 Support Plan – Staff Declaration](#) to record you have been trained by AQHP and understand the person's plan.
- Report any concerns or issues related to the person's diabetes medication administration or diabetes support straight away to the Disability Support Leader or On Call.
- Complete any checklists, recording charts, daily shift and handover notes, progress notes, updates on the work being done, and i-Sight events before finishing the shift.
 - Blood Glucose Levels must be written in the [NDIS LWB 5559 Blood Glucose Level Testing - Recording Chart](#).
 - If you support someone to take medication for diabetes through an injection, you need to fill out the [NDIS LWB 5645 Diabetes Injectible Medication Site – Recording Chart](#). This form helps you keep track of where the injection was given so a new spot is used with each injection.

The Disability Support Leader will:

- Complete health and wellness alerts as needed.
- Report any current health and wellbeing alerts to the On-Call and give them any information that will help them support staff and the person.
- Speak to a CPE Practice Support Leader/Specialist if you have concerns about health risks and support needs. They will help you find the best way to provide support in a safe way.

Further advice

Useful information and resources can be found on the Disability Pathway [Health and Wellbeing – Diabetes Management](#) page.