

# WHAT PARENTS NEED TO KNOW Screening for Type 1 Diabetes

**Type 1 diabetes** is a lifelong autoimmune condition causing the destruction of the cells in the pancreas that make insulin. This means the body can't control blood sugar (glucose) on its own. Without management of high blood glucose levels, over time it **can lead to serious and life-threatening health complications.**

Studies indicate that screening for autoantibodies through **a simple low to no-cost blood test can effectively identify those who will develop type 1 diabetes,** potentially before the need for insulin. It can also identify the stage of the condition.

## BENEFITS OF SCREENING YOUR CHILD EARLY

While type 1 diabetes cannot be prevented, early detection can help families to:

- Reduce the risk of life-threatening complications and hospitalization
- Plan and manage a potential diagnosis and treatment strategy

**Type 1 diabetes often starts in kids ages**

**4-6**  
years old

**10-14**  
years old

**but it can happen at any age.**

## COMMON SYMPTOMS OF DIABETES

- ☐ Irritability/behavioral changes
- ☐ Increased thirst or hunger
- ☐ Increased urination/bedwetting
- ☐ Unexplained weight loss
- ☐ Fruity-smelling breath
- ☐ Blurred vision
- ☐ Fatigue

## TYPE OF DIABETES

**Type 2 diabetes** is a metabolic disease influenced by a range of genetic and lifestyle factors that and can usually be prevented. Unlike type 2, **type 1 diabetes** is an autoimmune disease that cannot be prevented by lifestyle or dietary changes. While researchers don't know exactly what causes type 1 diabetes, those that seem to be more at risk have a close family relative with the disease or other autoimmune conditions.

## SCREENING RESOURCES FOR TYPE 1 DIABETES

The screening can identify proteins in the blood (ICA, GAD, IAA, IA-2, ZnT8) that may signal the body's immune system is attacking cells in the pancreas that produce insulin. **Talk to your child's health care provider about screening options.** Other free screening resources include:

### **TrialNet:** *TrialNet.org*

Offers screenings at locations and free home test kits for relatives of people with type 1 diabetes.

### **Autoimmunity Screening for Kids:** *AskHealth.org*

Provides free at-home screening test kits to children starting at age 1, and adults.

## EARLY STAGES OF TYPE 1 DIABETES

### STAGE 1

- Immune system mistakenly starts to attack insulin-producing beta cells
- 2 or more autoantibodies detected in blood
- Blood sugar levels are within a normal range
- No visible symptoms

### STAGE 2

- Immune system continues to attack beta cells
- 2 or more autoantibodies detected in blood
- Blood sugar levels are higher or lower than a normal range
- No visible symptoms

### STAGE 3

- Too many beta cells are damaged, body can't make enough insulin
- 2 or more autoantibodies detected
- Blood sugar levels higher than normal range, symptoms are obvious, serious health complications may occur, insulin dependence begins

## UNDERSTANDING THE SCREENING RESULTS

### ☐ **NEGATIVE** (0-1 autoantibodies)

If your child is under the age of 15, you may consider having them rescreened every year.

### ☐ **POSTIVE** (2 or more autoantibodies)

Talk to your child's health care provider about confirmatory testing, establishing a monitoring plan, and options for management.

Learn more about diabetes and resources for assistance at  
**FloridaHealth.gov/Diabetes**

