

WHAT TO TELL YOUR ROOMMATE

Moving away from home and living on your own—whether it's away at college or in an apartment with friends—can be both exciting and scary. There are many new challenges and experiences to face. Some of these can be compounded if you have diabetes. It is especially important that your roommates are aware that you have diabetes, and what that means.

You should sit down with your roommate and discuss the following:

- A simple explanation about what diabetes is, what you need to do each day (for example, blood glucose monitoring, insulin injections, eating meals and snacks on time)
- Diabetes is not contagious
- Explain what happens if your blood sugar goes low. List your symptoms:
- Tell your roommate that you can usually recognize these symptoms and treat yourself, but occasionally you can't, and you may need to rely on him/her for assistance.
 - Give sweetened pop or juice, or glucose tablets
 - Tell them that if you should refuse to cooperate, it is still very important that they make sure that you eat something with sugar in it (sugar packets, honey, syrup, candy)
 - If you aren't feeling better after 10-15 minutes, they should contact someone on your emergency phone list for help
 - If your roommate ever finds you unconscious or having a seizure, at any time, even after partying, or if they cannot wake you up, they should call 911 immediately
- Have a list of emergency contact numbers readily available
- Have a "stash" of food somewhere specific in your room, and explain the importance of it being your "emergency stash" of food, and that it can't be shared
- Provide opportunities for your roommate to ask questions about your diabetes. It may be totally familiar for you, but not necessarily for your roommate, and it may take time for him/her to adjust to it.

For further information:

Children with Diabetes website: www.childrenwithdiabetes.com/d_Oq_422.htm

See also our handout *Heading for College or University?*