

Diabetes: You Can Still Go Hiking and Camping

Teenagers and kids with Type 1 diabetes can continue to engage in activities such as camping and hiking. Some pre-planning may be necessary, but it is easy to manage your diabetes and still attend a camp, or go on a hiking trip. Of course, it is even easier if you go to a camp for diabetics because they will know how to care for you in an emergency. However, you do not have to count out church camp or a scout camp. You and your parents will need to consult with camp counselors and other adults that will be in attendance. They will need to monitor your progress and help you maintain proper blood sugar levels.

For children, it is recommended that they refrain from going alone to a non-diabetes camp, if they are under the age of eight. A parent or other responsible adult can often go along to help as a counselor, or help in the kitchen. Your child would then have you near to care for them in case of a medical emergency. If your child or teen is going to a camp or on hiking excursion alone, there are a few hints that will help them have a good time and you worry less. When going to a no-diabetes camp, make sure that the camp will allow your child call their doctor if they feel it is necessary. If the camp will not agree to that, find a different camp. Discuss your child's condition with the camp leaders, care providers and any medical staff before your child or teen goes to camp. Talk with them about the need for healthy eating habits and adequate activity so insulin dosages can be accurately prescribed.

Camping and hiking are both fun, and they are both activities in which you can take part if you are diabetic. Always carry extra water, and purification tablets with you when you are hiking. You are prone to getting dehydrated due to your diabetes. It is vital that you always keep water with you. You will need to carry supplies with you so be prepared to take care of your used supplies. Make sure to double-bag all lancets, clipped needles, and other medical trash. While hiking, carry your diabetes supplies in the middle of your pack and next to your back to avoid sun or heat damage. It is best to pack another set of supplies to keep in a different place, or with someone else on the chance that you should accidentally lose your backpack. If you utilize an insulin pump, be prepared in case of emergency by packing extra batteries and shot supplies in case the pump should malfunction. Keep all of your meters bound inside your sleeping bag in cold weather because they will give inaccurate readings if they are cold. Always make sure that an adult will check on you during the night. If you have had a day full of strenuous activity, your insulin levels could be irregular and an adult will need to be educated about any signs of insulin shock.

Hiking, camping, and backpacking are all wonderful outdoor activities and exercise. You do not have to forgo them if you have diabetes. With a little more forethought and planning, making sure people are aware of your disease, and keeping everything you need handy, you should be able to participate as anyone else would. Take the extra precaution of carrying extra water and healthy snacks. You will be able to enjoy your time outdoors and you will find yourself refreshed with a positive attitude.