

MOTORING

SPECIAL AUTOMOTIVE SUPPLEMENT

Driving with diabetes

Any parent who's had a teen leave the house in the car alone for the first time knows that anxious feeling. But for parents of teens with diabetes, there are a few extra things they should make sure their child knows before they are handed the keys for the first time.

With methods like insulin pump therapy and continuous glucose monitoring (CGM), treatment of diabetes has come a long way over the years. These technologies work together to deliver insulin and monitor glucose levels around the clock, alerting patients before they reach their low or high glucose limit. This enables teens to effectively manage their diabetes, reducing the risk of complications. With insulin pump therapy and CGM, along with taking the necessary precautions before getting behind the wheel, teens with diabetes can drive safely.

"Teenagers with diabetes, like adults, can drive effectively and be safe, but it means developing a plan ahead of time," says Dr.

Francine R. Kaufman, chief medical officer and vice president, Global Medical, Clinical and Health Affairs, Medtronic Diabetes. "It's critically important for teens with diabetes to manage their glucose levels. A low glucose level can impair judgment, which can be particularly dangerous behind the wheel of a car."

The American Diabetes Association recommends teens — and anyone else — with diabetes to take these precautions before grabbing their keys:

* Always carry your blood glucose meter and a quick-acting source of glucose in case you experience a blood glucose low. Pull the car over if you feel any signs of a low glucose level, such as feeling shaky, dizzy or confused.

* If you need to take glucose tablets or drink juice to get your blood glucose back to target range, do not get back on the road until you have checked your blood glucose and know that it is back at a safe level.

* If you have a history of high glucose levels, talk to

your healthcare team about whether it might affect your ability to be a safe driver.

* Have your eyes examined annually, as people with diabetes are more likely to develop impaired vision.

"The most important part of a teen's diabetes management plan is checking their glucose levels before driving," says Kaufman. She also recommends teens with diabetes take advantage of all the latest technologies that provide constant insulin delivery as well as timely and accurate readings of glucose levels. "There are tremendous advantages to using an insulin pump and a continuous glucose monitor together in an integrated system, such as new levels of protection, confidence, and freedom."

Most people with diabetes can drive as effectively as anyone else. If you have diabetes, it's always a good idea to check with your healthcare team to make sure that you are capable of driving and to go over your plan to make sure your diabetes does not get in the way of safe driving.



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