

Diabetic Summer Camps for Kids



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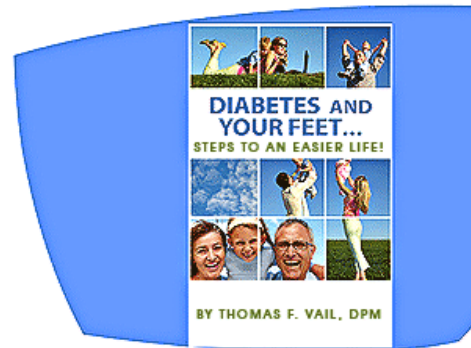
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Diabetes Camps for Kids



The words "diabetes" and "camp" may not seem to go together. Camps offer games and activities and they're supposed to be fun. Diabetes involves carbohydrate counting, blood testing, and sometimes insulin injections.



But diabetes camps can be of great help to kids.

What are Diabetes Camps?



Diabetes camps are designed for children with diabetes. They're meant to be safe places where kids can feel they are not alone in having diabetes. The camps have a staff of medical professionals who are experienced in diabetes care. Often there are physicians, nurses and dietitians. Sometimes there are nursing students, pediatric residents and social workers. In many of the camps, there are at least some counselors who also have diabetes and may even be former campers.

Diabetes camps often have all the usual camp activities such as swimming, arts and crafts, hiking and boating.

However, there is an additional educational component that helps kids learn how to manage their disease. For instance, they may learn how to adjust their diet or insulin when planning exercise, or they may learn how to give themselves their own shots for the first time. As with "regular" camps, there are all types and arrangements of diabetes camps.

There are family boys' camps, girls' camps, and co-ed camps.

Who Benefits From a Diabetes Camp?

The primary benefit of diabetes camp is the connection among children with diabetes and other children and counselors who have diabetes. Camp can break down the isolation kids often feel. However, camp is not for everyone, and some kids do not like it, while others thrive.

When it comes to determining who thrives and who doesn't, a lot depends on whether the child is emotionally mature enough for a camp. This readiness is something that the parents or guardians need to decide together with the child. Kids who need a lot of help and direction in their blood glucose self-monitoring, insulin injections, and food choices would definitely benefit from a diabetes camp.

What is Important to Look for in a Diabetes Camp? [Read More](#)





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Diabetes Camps for Kids



There are hundreds of diabetes camps to choose from around the world. For camps in the U.S., check for an accreditation by the American Camping Association. This accreditation means that the medical staff has the proper credentials, and background checks of the staff have been conducted. It also means that the camp adheres to certain cleanliness and staff-to-camper ratio standards.

The American Diabetes Association (ADA) has created guidelines for the proper care of diabetes at camp, and all diabetes camps have access to them. Ask whether the camp follows these guidelines.



Any well-equipped camp will be prepared to handle all aspects of diabetes care, including administering medication and insulin, providing appropriate meals, checking blood sugar levels, and dealing with low blood sugar reactions. Ask how often blood sugar levels are checked and how they handle any needed changes in insulin. Talk to the camp director and the counselors, too, if possible. Ask about a typical day, how many campers return each year, and how they handle spats or isolation among the kids. Ask for the contact information of parents of former campers and talk to them about their child's experiences.

Most importantly, ask the nagging questions. If homesickness at an overnight camp is a concern, ask whether additional visits are allowed. If the child's eating habits are questionable, ask how meals and snacks are arranged. Many diabetes camps are relatively expensive and can range from a few hundred dollars a week for a day camp to several thousands of dollars for an overnight camp. But many of these camps also offer full or partial scholarships based on financial need. Ask about financial aid before ruling out a camp that seems too expensive.

What Are Some Helpful Resources for Finding Diabetes Camps?

The Children with Diabetes organization maintains a list of kids' diabetes camps throughout the U.S., as do the ADA and the Diabetes Education and Camping Association, which also includes camps in Canada and other countries throughout the world. The ADA also publishes a guidebook, *Getting the Most Out of Diabetes Camp*, which has tips on everything from choosing the best camp to filling out applications.

