

ESSENTIAL GUIDE Diabetes at work 10 key points

Living better with diabetes



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1. OBLIGATION TO COMMUNICATE

There is no obligation to communicate your condition; it is a personal decision. However, it is recommended that diabetics have a conversation with the occupational physician (if there is one in the company). The occupational physician must adhere to professional confidentiality and may assess your suitability for the task at hand, provide suggestions, and/or make arrangements with your employer (e.g. for break times to be respected).

2. WHEN AND WITH WHOM TO TALK ABOUT YOUR DIABETES

Living with diabetes means knowing how to adapt it to your work rhythm. For this reason, once a relationship of trust has been established, it is useful to inform a colleague or your employer so that they can help you if necessary.

3. BEFORE LEAVING FOR WORK

Make sure you take your blood glucose monitoring equipment and medication (insulin) with you, as well as fast-acting sugar (e.g. sugar cubes, a carton of juice, etc.) and a snack (e.g. a cereal bar).

4. EATING AT WORK

Go with how you feel! Take a home-made lunch with you to find out how much you need, or have lunch in a restaurant if that suits you. Put together a well-balanced lunch and avoid ready-made meals that are too salty, sweet, or fatty.

5. WHAT TO DO IF YOU HAVE LOW BLOOD SUGAR

Take a 10-minute break to eat your sugar, and stay calm. Recheck your blood sugar before returning to work. If you are prone to asymptomatic hypoglycaemic, tell others about the correct actions they can take in an emergency.

6. IRREGULAR WORKING HOURS/NIGHT WORK

This factor can influence your diabetes management and requires you to be rigorous (regular blood glucose monitoring, insulin adjustment or snacking if necessary).

A continuous glucose monitor and/or an insulin pump will facilitate monitoring and adjustment. Adapt your treatment to offset the irregularity of your meals. If you are on injections, it is essential that your slow insulin is given at a fixed time.

7. DRIVING AT WORK

If you have to drive for work, avoid the risk of low blood sugar while driving. Check yourself before driving and follow the Swiss guidelines (blood glucose above 5 mmol before driving).

8. HIGH-RISK WORK

As far as possible, it is preferable to avoid jobs where the constraints of diabetes add difficulty and stress to the work (e.g. working at heights, using dangerous machines, working alone, etc.).

9. STATE OF MIND

Your diabetes should not prevent you from having a fulfilling professional life. You can work out solutions and accommodations with your boss, and you can occasionally have some fun with your co-workers as long as you keep checking yourself.

10. MORE ABOUT DIABETES

A diabetic who knows his or her chronic disease and treatment well is a diabetic who minimises the difficulties and risks of incidents at work. If you need advice, do not hesitate to contact your doctor or the Association Valaisanne du Diabète (Valais Diabetes Association) (027/322.99.72).



Sources: www.hug.ch/vivre-avec-diabete/geriez-votre-diabete-au-travail
www.ceed-diabete.org/blog/diabete-et-travail
Management: www.sgedssed.ch