

# Helping Your Child Get Used to Their Insulin Pump and Continuous Glucose Monitor

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Devices like insulin pumps and continuous glucose monitors (CGMs) have many benefits. But getting used to them can present unique challenges. Here are some ideas to help support your child with common stumbling blocks that can sometimes go with wearing electronic devices.

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## Dealing with discomfort

It's normal to feel uncomfortable with something when it's new. Recognize that feeling uncomfortable with wearing a device on your body for a chronic condition is common for all ages. If your child describes feeling this way, validate and normalize it. Say, "It's ok that you feel uncomfortable right now, your insulin pump is new."

- Support your child in sitting with this discomfort and remind them working through this will help build skills to overcome other hurdles in life—diabetes-related or otherwise.
- Emphasize that wearing a device is nothing to be ashamed of and encourage other adults in your child's life to do the same.
- Assess your child's level of comfort wearing their device in public. Work together to brainstorm clothing ideas and outfits that can make the device less visible, if this is what they want. For example, suggest pants or skirts with pockets to hold the pump.
- Encourage the use of patterned skins (CGM patches) and adhesive tapes, stickers, and belt-like pump pouches. These can make wearing a device more "fun," particularly for younger children.
- Seek a children's book about diabetes and a child who wears a device. Children's books are a great way for elementary school age children to learn that other children with diabetes wear devices, too.

## How to handle questions from others

People who notice your child's devices may ask them about what they are. Work with your child to come up with ways to respond in advance; this can help them feel prepared to handle the situation smoothly.

- Prepare different explanations for different people. Prompt your child to think about how they might respond to questions about their devices from a friend versus a stranger.
- Have your younger child share their devices with their classmates in a "show and tell" format. This way peers are able to get a lot of questions answered all at once.
- Understand that sometimes, your child may not feel like answering questions at all. Emphasize that not wanting to explain their diabetes is OK, and help them plan a response that can redirect the conversation (e.g. "It's my superpower, what's yours?")
- Remind your child that people who ask questions are not necessarily passing judgement—they may simply be curious or interested!

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### To Learn More

- Endocrinology  
206-987-2640
- Ask your child's healthcare provider
- [seattlechildrens.org](http://seattlechildrens.org)

### Free Interpreter Services

- In the hospital, ask your nurse.
- From outside the hospital, call the toll-free Family Interpreting Line, 1-866-583-1527. Tell the interpreter the name or extension you need.



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### Devices and disruption

Many diabetes devices use noise-based alerts. The idea of dealing with disruptive alarms or notifications in public can feel stressful for many children.

- Explain alerts and their purpose to adults in your child's life like teachers and friends' parents, in advance so they won't be taken by surprise.
- Work with your medical team to program alerts that keep your child safe but minimize unnecessary disruptions. This could mean having a higher threshold for a "high" alert, for example.

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### Boundaries and parental involvement with CMG data

- Even for older children and teens, maintaining oversight of devices and data is essential. Work with your child to establish boundaries and responsibilities, and revisit these as needed.
- CGM data sharing has many benefits, but constant talk about your child's blood sugars can become overwhelming for them. Even well-meaning comments can sometimes discourage children and teens from wanting to use their CGM in the long term.
- If your child has a phone, work together to set reasonable boundaries regarding when it is (and isn't) an appropriate time to contact them about their blood sugar. If multiple parents have access, coordinate your responses so that your child doesn't receive more messages than necessary.