

Managing Players with Diabetes – Guidance for Trainers

Understanding Diabetes in Sport

Players with diabetes (most commonly Type 1, but sometimes Type 2) need to carefully manage their blood glucose levels, particularly during physical activity. Exercise can cause levels to drop (hypoglycaemia) or, in some cases, rise.

Key Signs to Watch For

Please be aware of symptoms of **low blood sugar (hypo)**:

- Dizziness or light-headedness
- Shaking or weakness
- Sweating
- Confusion or unusual behaviour
- Headache
- Sudden fatigue

And **high blood sugar (hyperglycaemia)**:

- Excessive thirst
- Frequent urination
- Fatigue
- Blurred vision

Trainer Responsibilities

- Be aware of which players have diabetes (confidentially noted in medical forms).
- Ensure these players have immediate access to their glucose monitoring equipment and snacks (jelly beans is a good one).
- Allow players to check blood sugar levels when needed—this should never be restricted.
- Be flexible with training intensity if a player is experiencing symptoms.

Managing a Hypo (Low Blood Sugar)

If a player shows signs of a hypo:

1. Stop activity immediately
2. Provide fast-acting sugar (e.g., sports drink, jellybeans, glucose tablets)
3. Wait 10–15 minutes and reassess
4. Do not allow return to play until levels are stable

Emergency Situations

- If a player becomes disoriented, unresponsive, or unable to safely consume sugar, treat it as a medical emergency.

- Follow emergency protocols and call for medical assistance immediately.

Before Training and Games

- Encourage players to arrive prepared (having eaten appropriately and with supplies).
- Check in if needed, particularly in hot weather or high-intensity sessions.

Our priority is always player safety and wellbeing. If you are ever unsure, err on the side of caution and stop play. Open communication with players is key—they know their condition best.

If anyone would like further information or a quick run-through on managing these situations, please let me know.

I have provided some links with further information but please always work with the player and their families to ensure that all trainers/clubs are across the players action plans.

[Exercise & diabetes - Diabetes Australia](#)

<https://essendonfl.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/First-Aid-Diabetes.pdf>

[Diabetes action and management plans - Diabetes Victoria](#)

Thanks for your ongoing support and commitment to player care.