



# Self care tips for managing Diabetes type -1 and Huntington's disease

This fact sheet has been designed for community members confronting the unique challenges posed by both Type 1 Diabetes and Huntington's disease. Effectively managing these conditions requires a comprehensive self-care approach that recognises the specific hurdles associated with each condition. It is crucial to work closely with healthcare professionals to develop a personalised plan. Adopting a holistic strategy that integrates proactive measures is essential for fostering the overall well-being of individuals contending with both Huntington's Disease and T1DM.

The initial section of this factsheet emphasises the significance of sleep and gut health, addressing their crucial roles in managing both Huntington's disease and Type 1 Diabetes Mellitus. As understanding grows regarding the intricate inter-connection between gut and brain health, there is an increasing emphasis on lifestyle factors for effective management. Recognising the impact of sleep and gut health becomes paramount in navigating the challenges presented by Huntington's disease and Type 1 Diabetes Mellitus.

## **1. Maintain a healthy Gut:**

Gut microbiome, consists of small microorganisms, including bacteria and fungi that promotes digestive wellbeing when in balance. Maintaining a healthy gut microbiome, particularly focusing on Short-Chain Fatty Acids (SCFAs), is essential for overall gut and immune system well-being. Imbalances in gut bacteria, observed in conditions like Type 1 Diabetes, can increase susceptibility to other health issues. Disruption in bacterial balance may lead to gut problems, triggering immune system disturbances. Ongoing research, especially for individuals with Huntington's disease and Type 1 Diabetes Mellitus, aims to understand and preserve this delicate balance.

### **Strategies to build and protect the gut macrobacteria:**

To support a healthy gut microbiome, incorporate prebiotic-rich foods like apples, oats, and dark chocolate into each meal. Embrace fermented foods such as kombucha, Kimchi, or Miso, while minimising the consumption of pre-packaged foods. Diversify your diet with a wide variety of plant-based foods, emphasising a colorful array. Additionally, opt for natural sweeteners like maple syrup or brown sugar in moderation, avoiding artificial sweeteners to foster a balanced and thriving gut microbiome.

## **2. Good Sleep:**

The connection between sleep and disease management is crucial, with inadequate sleep impacting blood glucose levels and overall health. Quality sleep plays a vital role in maintaining a healthy weight and regulating appetite, which relates your mental and cognitive wellbeing. Poor or insufficient sleep can lead to elevated blood glucose levels in individuals with diabetes and increase the risk of insulin resistance.

### **Strategies to improve sleep:**

To promote good sleep, exercise regularly during the day, avoid daytime naps, establish a consistent bedtime, and adhere to a fixed wake-up time. Maintain a steady sleep schedule, even on weekends, and implement a 15–30-minute rule: if sleep eludes you, engage in quiet activities for 15- 30 minutes, that would help you sleep. These practices contribute to better sleep quality, positively influencing blood glucose levels and overall care.



The second part of the factsheet delves into the specific management of Type 1 Diabetes to safeguard cognitive well-being. The symptoms listed below can arise due to mismanagement or irregular care of diabetes. Given the established link between cognitive impairment and diabetes management, it is crucial to schedule regular visits with your GP or Endocrinologist. Educating your caregivers on monitoring post-meal glucose levels and maintaining consistency with insulin doses is equally essential. Huntington's Victoria is committed to empowering individuals through information, and adopting a holistic management strategy enhances your ability to navigate the complexities of coexisting Type 1 Diabetes Mellitus and Huntington's Disease, promoting cognitive health and overall well-being.

### **1. Hyperglycemia:**

Hyperglycemia is marked by a slow and steady rise in the blood sugar levels, that results in elevated blood sugar levels as high as 180-200 mg/dL or 10-11.1 mmol/L. In any individual with or without diabetes, presenting symptoms includes increased thirst, frequent urination, blurred vision, weakness, abdominal pain, nausea, confusion, and, in severe cases, loss of consciousness. Prompt medical attention is crucial if experiencing these symptoms.

#### **Management Strategies:**

Management involves monitoring blood sugar levels regularly, adhering to prescribed medications, maintaining a healthy diet, and incorporating regular exercise to prevent complications associated with diabetes.

### **2. Diabetic Ketoacidosis (DKA):**

Diabetic ketoacidosis (DKA) is a severe complication associated with elevated levels of ketones in the blood, a condition arising from increased fat breakdown to generate energy. Recognise symptoms like increased thirst, frequent urination, nausea, abdominal pain and lack of appetite.

#### **Management Strategies:**

For individuals with both Huntington's Disease and T1DM, proactive monitoring is essential. Regularly check blood sugar levels, especially during times of illness, stress, or recent injury. Consider utilising urine ketone test kits, available at drugstores.

### **3. Hypoglycemia:**

Hypoglycemia occurs when blood sugar levels drop below normal, leading to symptoms like shakiness, sweating, confusion, hunger, and dizziness. Severe cases may result in complications such as seizures, coma, or even death.

#### **Management Strategies:**

Whether related to diabetes or not, prompt treatment is essential to restore blood sugar levels to the standard range, achieved through high-sugar foods, drinks, or medication. Individuals with diabetes should seek immediate medical attention if hypoglycemia persists despite initial treatments like consuming sugary items or glucose tablets.