

Warning Signs of Diabetes

Overview for School Nurses / Personnel / Families

*A COLLABORATION BETWEEN THE JORDAN BENNETT WEISS FUND
AND THE CITY OF NEWTON HEALTH DEPARTMENT*

JBW FUND – PO Box 590223 NEWTON MA 02459 – JBWfund@aol.com

Jordan Weiss, a nine-year old from Massachusetts, passed away in his sleep from complications related to undiagnosed type 1 diabetes. The *Jordan Bennett Weiss Fund* was established to foster awareness about the warning signs of diabetes. Early detection and knowledge of the warning signs is our greatest weapon against the disease and its complications. Sometimes the symptoms may be obvious and sometimes they are not. In Jordan's case, his symptoms were seemingly subtle and attributed to other illness. Symptoms which might appear to be unrelated, when viewed in the context of the list of warning signs, may suggest intervention.

Because we, as a community, are dedicated to the well-being of our students and children, we hope that you will familiarize yourself with the warning signs/symptoms of diabetes.

BEHAVIOR(S) a child might be exhibiting at home or in school that could indicate UNdiagnosed diabetes:

- Frequent trips to bathroom (especially in close sequence)
- Frequent trips to water fountain
- Irritability
- Lack of energy; fatigue
- Weight loss; thin appearing
- Rubbing the eyes; difficulty seeing the board in school or TV at home
- Difficulty paying attention

For children with diagnosed diabetes (*get nurse immediately if in school*):

- Lack of energy; fatigue
- Difficulty paying attention
- Confusion (could indicate low blood sugar) or difficulty concentrating

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Familiarize yourself with the warning signs / symptoms of diabetes. Sometimes the symptoms are very obvious, and other times they are not. **Early detection and knowledge** of the warning signs is your greatest weapon against the disease and its complications!*

TYPE 1 DIABETES MELLITUS: *These symptoms may occur suddenly and must receive immediate medical attention.*

- * Excessive thirst
- * Frequent urination, sometimes exhibited by return of bedwetting in previously trained children (urination in large quantities day and night)
- * Sudden vision changes
- * A sweet, fruity odor may be present in urine, on one's breath/body (caused by high amounts of ketones in the blood and/or urine)
- * Extreme hunger (increased appetite)
- * Rapid or unexplained weight loss
- * Fatigue (weak and tired)
- * Irritability and mood changes
- * Drowsiness, lethargy
- * Nausea and/or vomiting
- * Abdominal pain
- * Rapid, hard breathing (heavy, labored)
- * Confusion, Stupor, Unconsciousness

TYPE 2 DIABETES MELLITUS: *These symptoms occur gradually, however, they must receive immediate medical attention.*

- * Blurred vision
- * Tingling or numbness in the legs, feet or fingers
- * Frequent infections of the skin
- * Recurring skin, gum or urinary tract infections
- * Darker patches of skin usually in neck folds
- * Itching of skin and/or genitals
- * Drowsiness
- * Slow healing of cuts and bruises
- * Any of the symptoms listed under type 1 diabetes

*** PLEASE NOTE:** MANY OF THESE SYMPTOMS CAN BE RELATED TO ILLNESSES THAT ARE NOT ASSOCIATED WITH DIABETES, INCLUDING THE FLU. **THERE SHOULD BE NO FEVER WITH DIABETES.** THIS IS A CRITICAL FACTOR IN DIFFERENTIATING BETWEEN THE FLU! ALSO URINATING AT NIGHT OR WETTING THE BED IS A KEY SIGN THAT THIS COULD BE DIABETES. ONLY A HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONAL CAN PROVIDE APPROPRIATE DIAGNOSTIC TESTS AND TREATMENTS.