

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 CENTRE MA 02459 – JBWfund@aol.com

On January 19, 2003, Jordan Weiss, a fourth grader at Mason-Rice School in Newton, Massachusetts passed away suddenly in his sleep from complications related to undiagnosed type 1 (*formerly juvenile*) diabetes.

The Jordan Bennett Weiss Fund was established by his family, friends and community to foster awareness and education throughout the community and beyond, focusing on type 1 and type 2 diabetes and its complications.

To honor Jordan's memory, the JBW Fund is committed to distributing information pertaining to the warning signs of diabetes, which was not available to his family.

Knowledge of the warning signs is our greatest weapon against this disease. Sometimes the symptoms may be obvious and sometimes they are not. In Jordan's case, his symptoms were limited, 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 in school that could indicate UNdiagnosed diabetes:

- Frequent trips to bathroom (especially in close sequence)
- Frequent trips to water fountain
- Seems irritable
- Lack of energy; fatigue
- Looks as though they have lost weight
- Rubbing the eyes; hard to see the board
- Difficulty paying attention

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

- 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 often occur suddenly and must receive immediate medical attention.*

- * Excessive thirst
- * Frequent urination, sometimes exhibited by bedwetting (in large quantities)
- * Sudden vision changes
- * High amounts of sugar in the blood and/or urine (A sweet, fruity odor may be present in urine, on one's breath/body.)
- * 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 IS NO FEVER WITH DIABETES. THIS IS A CRITICAL FACTOR IN DIFFERENTIATING BETWEEN THE FLU! ONLY A HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONAL CAN PROVIDE APPROPRIATE DIAGNOSTIC TESTS AND TREATMENTS.**