

Shared decision-making after type 1 diabetes diagnosis:

Helping patients understand next steps

Shared decision-making helps health care professionals provide personalized, collaborative and emotionally supportive patient care. This approach helps patients who are diagnosed with type 1 diabetes (T1D) and their families understand the complexity of T1D, consider available care and management options, express their values and preferences, and feel empowered to manage a lifelong condition. By fostering open dialogue with patients, you can build trust, reduce anxiety, and guide them toward choices that align with their lifestyle and goals.

Goals for patients with T1D

It is important to discuss both short-term and long-term goals with patients who are diagnosed with T1D. Examples include the following:

- **Short-term goals**

- Stabilize blood glucose.
- Learn self-management skills.
- Build a support system.

- **Long-term goals**

- Prevent complications (e.g., eye problems, kidney disease, nerve damage).
- Maintain quality of life.
- Support emotional well-being.

T1D care and management

There is no “one-size-fits-all” approach to T1D care and management. By having conversations with your patients about all of their options, you can help them make informed decisions that fit their lifestyle and goals. *Table 1* provides an overview of available insulin delivery methods and options for glucose monitoring, patient education and emotional support.

A shared decision-making approach to T1D care and management fosters patient ownership, reduces resistance and builds confidence. These are key factors in sustaining long-term adherence and achieving better health outcomes. When patients understand their options and feel that their preferences are respected, they are more likely to commit to their treatment plan and follow through with daily management tasks.

Key talking points about T1D:

- T1D is an autoimmune condition in which the pancreas stops producing insulin.
- It requires lifelong insulin therapy and daily management.
- Reactions such as fear, grief and confusion are normal after a T1D diagnosis. Health care professionals can help connect patients and their families to education and emotional support resources.

Suggested questions to ask your patient:

- What do you already know about type 1 diabetes?
- What are your biggest concerns right now?

Table 1. Overview of type 1 diabetes care and management options

Insulin delivery methods ^{1,2}			
	Pros	Cons	Lifestyle fit
Multiple daily injections	Simplicity; widespread availability; lower cost	Frequency of daily injections	Good for use in structured routines
Insulin pump therapy	Flexible dosing; fewer injections	Device management; higher cost	Good for tech-savvy, active patients
Hybrid closed-loop systems	Automated insulin delivery; improved control	Technology learning curve; higher cost	Ideal for motivated patients who are comfortable with technology
Glucose monitoring ¹⁻³			
	Pros	Cons	Lifestyle fit
Blood glucose monitoring by capillary (fingerstick) device	Accuracy; lower cost	Frequency of checks	Good for patients who are less comfortable with technology
Continuous glucose monitoring	Real-time blood glucose data; alerts for highs/lows	Need to wear sensor; data overload	Helpful for proactive monitoring
Patient education			
	Pros	Cons	Lifestyle fit
Group education classes	Interactive learning; peer engagement	Fixed schedule; less personalization	Good for social learners
One-on-one education	Personalized instruction; tailored support	Limited availability; time demands	Best for patients who need individualized help
Online learning modules	Flexible access; self-paced learning	Need for internet access; less interaction	Ideal for independent learners
Emotional support			
	Pros	Cons	Lifestyle fit
Mental health counseling	Professional emotional support	Stigma; access barriers	Important for patients with emotional challenges
Peer support groups	Shared experiences; community support	Potential lack of professional guidance	Helpful for patients seeking community
Self-guided resources	Privacy; self-paced emotional learning	Limited feedback; need for self-motivation	Good for private, self-directed patients

References

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3. National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases. Continuous glucose monitoring. June 2023. Accessed October 23, 2025. www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/diabetes/overview/managing-diabetes/continuous-glucose-monitoring