**TEST………….know what it stands for, recognise the symptoms and take immediate action as time is critical in a diagnosis of Type 1 diabetes**

A new campaign was launched today to raise awareness of the general public especially young parents, young adults and grandparents of the symptoms of Type 1 diabetes in children.

The campaign was launched because a delay in the diagnosis of Type 1 diabetes can quickly lead to a life-threatening complication call Diabetic Ketoacidosis or in short DKA.

Children get diabetes too. On average 25 children are diagnosed with Type 1 diabetes each month. In 2020, over 40% of new admissions with diabetes had DKA. This is an increase from 31.6% % in the period 2011-2015 and has increased steadily from 2016 .

Professor Edna Roche, University of Dublin, Trinity College and Consultant Paediatric Endocrinologist, CHI at Tallaght University Hospital developed and leads the Irish Childhood Diabetes National Register (ICDNR) and worked with the National Register Steering Group and students from the Technological University of Dublin to develop a simple acronym to help people recognise the symptoms of Type 1 diabetes in a child.

TEST represents Thirst (increased), Energy (reduced), Sudden (weight change) and Toilet (trips increased). These symptoms are key indications that you/your child might have Type 1 diabetes and a simple blood glucose test is required urgently. These symptoms are similar for adults.

The symptoms of Type 1 diabetes are subtle, and they are often missed or misconstrued as a simple viral or urine infection resulting in delays in diagnosis with potentially detrimental consequences for the child and the family.

A simple fingerprick blood glucose test by a GP or pharmacist can greatly help make the diagnosis of type 1 diabetes in a child or adult feeling unwell.

Often type 1 diabetes is not considered a first line diagnosis in a child when symptoms first appear. The campaign aims to raise awareness of TEST among the general public and healthcare professionals as well.

*Ciara Tuke’s son Lucas ended up seriously ill in hospital with DKA in 2019 at the age of just three. She had noticed he was more thirsty than usual and was going to the toilet a lot but was unaware these were signs of Type 1 diabetes. She brought him to her GP on a Friday after he complained of a sore mouth and throat. He was diagnosed with thrush. However, that weekend, things deteriorated.*

*“On the Saturday, he was very lethargic and then on the Sunday, things took a turn for the worse. He wasn’t eating and he wasn’t really drinking. Then he started vomiting and his breathing seemed laboured. He was awake but seemed spaced out. “We brought him to Tallaght University Hospital where he ended, he ended up in a high dependency unit because he was in full DKA. We had never heard of this!* ***,”*** *Ciara from Dublin said.*

Healthy ketone levels are considered lower than 0.6mmol/L. Lucas’s levels had been at 6.6mmol/L.

Professor Edna Roche and Diabetes Ireland are asking members of the general public to help spread the message. Our goal is to reach at least 1 million people in Ireland and the charity says it cannot achieve this on its own. To help spread the message, please visit [www.diabetes.ie](http://www.diabetes.ie) and help spread awareness of TEST to your family and friends.

*Ruth O’Mahony’s daughter, Robyn, was five years old when she was diagnosed with Type 1 diabetes in 2020. Ruth noticed her daughter was very thirsty and was going to the toilet a lot, but she did not know these were signs of Type 1 diabetes.*

*She looked up the symptoms on the internet and diabetes kept coming up. However, she says that because Robyn was still running around and was in great form, people were saying to her that it couldn’t be diabetes and she was being “a bit dramatic”.*

*However, one day, she picked her daughter up and realised that she was lighter than expected and that “set alarm bells ringing”.*

*“I think people are particularly hesitant about going to their GP during Covid, but please don’t be. My GP once said to me, ‘if you come with something and it turns out to be nothing, that is a good result for the GP’. You are not wasting their time. You know your child best and if you feel there is something off, go to the doctor,” Ruth from Wickow said.*

*Ms Leah Chung from Wexford is 21 years old and was diagnosed with Type 1 diabetes at the age of 11. She remembers being really exhausted and losing lots of weight. She was also drinking a lot of fluids. Her mother suspected diabetes because a number of other family members already had the condition – in fact her cousin was diagnosed in the same week as her.*

*Despite having family members around her with the condition, Leah says she felt shy about talking about diabetes and she went through periods when her ketones went too high, and she was at risk of DKA. I remember times in my early teens when my ketones would go high, and I would feel really numb. I never fully passed out, but I definitely had that really bad ‘almost there’ moment,” she says.*

Professor Hilary Hoey, chairperson of Diabetes Ireland said “delays in the diagnosis of Type 1 diabetes is an ongoing problem in Ireland. What we are campaigning for is that if you as a parent recognise these symptoms or as a healthcare professional feel Type 1 diabetes maybe present, do a simple blood glucose finger prick test which can greatly help make the diagnosis of type 1 diabetes immediately.

The campaign is supported by the Irish Childhood Diabetes National Register (ICDNR), Diabetes Ireland and Novo Nordisk Ltd. ENDS.

**Notes for Editors:**

**For interview contact Carr Communications on**

**What is Diabetic Ketoacidosis (DKA) and does everyone diagnosed with diabetes get DKA?**

In type 1 diabetes the body stops producing insulin. Insulin is the hormone produced by the pancreas to allow glucose or sugar from food enter the body’s cells to be used as fuel. When insulin is absent glucose cannot be used and levels of glucose build up in the body. The body responds to these high sugar levels by excreting the excessive glucose in the urine leading to the key symptoms of diabetes - passing large volumes of urine frequently resulting in dehydration and increased thirst. Diabetes can be diagnosed at this stage.

However, if the diagnosis is delayed and symptoms persist the body increasingly depends on a backup fuel supply and breaks down fat excessively to form acidic ketone bodies. These ketones build up in the body changing the body’s acidity and result in the life-threatening condition of diabetic ketoacidosis. Diabetic ketoacidosis (DKA) is an avoidable complication of diabetes.

The majority of children diagnosed with Type 1 diabetes do not have DKA at diagnosis and are diagnosed because of high blood sugar levels. However, a worrying proportion of our children and adolescents, over 40%, have progressed to DKA at the time of their diagnosis. The purpose of this campaign is to reduce the number presenting with DKA by increasing awareness of the symptoms of T1D and encouraging early diagnosis.

ICDNR…..

Diabetes Ireland

Diabetes Ireland is the national charity dedicated to providing support, education and motivation to all people affected by diabetes. We raise public awareness of diabetes and its symptoms and fund Irish-based research into diabetes. We provide excellent services for people living with Type 2. View our Living with Type 2 Diabetes section on [www.diabetes.ie](http://www.diabetes.ie)

To find out more about living with diabetes, becoming a member or upcoming events or to follow Diabetes Ireland on social media visit <https://www.diabetes.ie/>, [https://www.instagram.com/diabetesireland/](https://nam03.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.instagram.com%2Fdiabetesireland%2F&data=02%7C01%7C%7Cf5ff9afd1801427b4a5608d81787c5af%7C61a70d37ff6345e3bb68f0edbf718ffd%7C0%7C0%7C637285219497637178&sdata=sJzGRnjo1ym%2BrudUQt4fS3%2FAgMgNPsO92Cq8rHAow%2BY%3D&reserved=0), [https://twitter.com/Diabetes\_ie](https://nam03.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Ftwitter.com%2FDiabetes_ie&data=02%7C01%7C%7Cf5ff9afd1801427b4a5608d81787c5af%7C61a70d37ff6345e3bb68f0edbf718ffd%7C0%7C0%7C637285219497647172&sdata=B3%2BKvuxI6q5MWQtyl9U38xC48D8u1kxRg93ecBmz3GI%3D&reserved=0), [https://www.facebook.com/DiabetesIreland/](https://nam03.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.facebook.com%2FDiabetesIreland%2F&data=02%7C01%7C%7Cf5ff9afd1801427b4a5608d81787c5af%7C61a70d37ff6345e3bb68f0edbf718ffd%7C0%7C0%7C637285219497647172&sdata=DwswTT%2BGXK1bRJg%2Bxsn8RiwdWXTOmreDrrf3NGBjOP4%3D&reserved=0), [https://ie.linkedin.com/company/diabetes-federation-of-ireland](https://nam03.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fie.linkedin.com%2Fcompany%2Fdiabetes-federation-of-ireland&data=02%7C01%7C%7Cf5ff9afd1801427b4a5608d81787c5af%7C61a70d37ff6345e3bb68f0edbf718ffd%7C0%7C0%7C637285219497657169&sdata=2eRS3RG%2BIX6g4CtTZXKhqUm75KEEkFfy9uY539CoDA4%3D&reserved=0)

**Prevalence Rates of Diabetes in Ireland**It is estimated that there are now 225,840 people with diabetes in Ireland of which 10-15% have Type 1 diabetes, the remainder have Type 2 diabetes. Prevalence is forecasted to be 7.5% of the population by 2030. Diabetes affects 1 in 3 Irish families.

**Differences between Type 1 & Type 2 Diabetes**

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|       **What is the difference between Type 1 diabetes and Type 2 diabetes?** |
| **Characteristics of the condition:** | **Type 1 Diabetes** | **Type 2 Diabetes** |
| **Risk Factors:**Very Different | Having another auto-immune condition. Having a parent or sibling with type 1 diabetes combined with environmental factors and a common infection which may trigger onset. | Poor diet.  Being overweight.  Being sedentary.  Genetics.  Being over the age of 45.  Belonging to high-risk ethnic group.  If you had gestational diabetes or a baby weighing over 9 pounds.  Certain medications.  |
| **Symptoms:**Some overlapping | Fast onset of extremely high blood glucose levels which cause weight loss, hunger, fatigue, thirst and frequent urination.  | High blood glucose, thirst, waking in the middle of the night to urinate, fatigue, high blood pressure, urinary tract infection, neuropathy. But may also have no symptoms or just mild thirst or repeated infections.  |
| **Nature of Illness**: Very Different | Autoimmune condition, your cells kill off your insulin-producing (beta) cells.  Body no longer makes insulin. | Insulin-inefficiency.  Body makes insulin, but it isn’t used properly by the body or is not enough to meet body demand.  |
| **Onset:**Very Different | Quick onset:  Generally, within a few weeks or months. | Slow onset:  May be several years after blood glucose begin to rise.  Up to 12 years can pass between onset and diagnosis of type 2 diabetes.    |
| **Treatment:**Same to varyingdegree  | Intense daily self-management of insulin to balance food intake or exercise. Must take multiple injections of insulin or infusion through insulin pump. | Daily self-management of food intake, exercise and medication. Over time roughly 40% may need to use insulin injections. |
| **Age when you get it:**Typically different  | Typically, early childhood or teenage years, but can occur at any age. | Typically, adults, but can occur at any age. |
| **Numbers of Ireland:**Very different | c. 14,000 – 16,000 persons. | c. 160,000 – 180,000 persons. |
| **Complications:**Same but to varyingdegrees | Short term complications give risk to acute emergencies such as hypoglycaemia and ketoacidosis. Long term exposure to low blood glucose levels can cause hypoglycaemic unawareness. Long term exposure to high blood sugar levels can cause blood vessel damage. Blood vessel damage can cause blindness, retinopathy, heart disease, kidney disease, and foot problems including amputation and earlier mortality. | Many people at diagnosis of diabetes may have already had up to 12 years exposure to long term high blood glucose levels and have complications at diagnosis i.e. damage to large and small blood vessels throughout the body which causes blindness, retinopathy, heart disease, kidney disease, amputation, gastroparesis, earlier mortality. |
| **Is it preventable?**Very Different | No. | Yes, up to 58% with lifestyle modifications. |
| **Is it reversible?** Very Different | No. | Type 2 diabetes can be put into remission when there is significant fat loss around the pancreas which may stimulate insulin production, this will depend on a number of factors including amount of weight loss and duration of diabetes. |
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