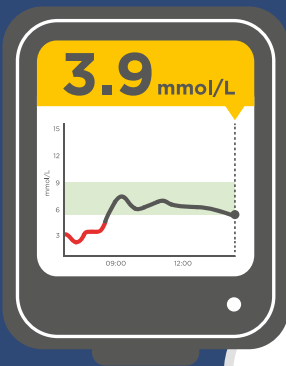


Managing Type 1 diabetes: post-school, at university and in the workplace

Developed as part of SEREN Connect diabetes education; supporting young people and young adults living with Type 1 diabetes





Quality in Care
Diabetes Education Programme of the Year 2020
Quality in Care
Diabetes Judge's Special Award 2020

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**With thanks to all who inspired, contributed,
and believed in this programme.**

**We're committed to creating resources that
work for the people who use them.**

Please take a moment to provide us with
some feedback. A few minutes of your time
makes a really big difference.



The world of work

Deciding on a career, and what to do in life, is a big decision. Whether you have always known exactly what career path you want to take, or if you are still deciding, managing Type 1 diabetes and trying to stay on top of it, as much as possible, puts you in the best position to pursue the career and life that you want.

There are different paths to employment and depending on your skills, interests and individual circumstances, you will need to decide which one feels best suited to you.

The world of work (with or without Type 1 diabetes) can include:

- Apprenticeships
- Being self-employed or owning your own business
- Being unemployed or between jobs
- Changing career paths
- Climbing the career ladder
- Flexible work
- Full-time work
- Job-seeking
- Juggling work and studying

- Looking forward to retirement
 - Part-time work
 - Redundancy
 - Seasonal work at home or abroad
 - Starting out on a career
 - Volunteering
 - Working for an employer
- (This list is not exhaustive)

#Type1Tips for further study and university

Moving to university can be an exciting and daunting time. Moving to a new area or a new home, having a new routine, new friends and being away from your usual support network may take some planning. This can take some time but adapting and adjusting to new surroundings and finding your 'new normal' can help you enjoy yourself, work and study, whilst taking care of your health too.

Identifying people and/or services that can offer support to you before you go and while you're there can help.

Talk to your diabetes team

If you have any concerns or worries about managing Type 1 diabetes away from home, or if you start to struggle with anything as a young adult, talk to your team as they may be able to identify things that can help you. This can include advice on how to collect your prescriptions, change your sharps bin, tweak your insulin regime or help you manage things like alcohol. They may also offer you space on diabetes courses to help you re-cap information and learn to manage Type 1 diabetes as an adult.



Decide if you want to move all your diabetes care with you

If you're moving away for university, but will be home for holidays, you'll need to make a decision where to receive your diabetes care. You can talk to your team about your options, as they may be able to schedule your clinic appointments around the time that you'll be returning home, but you will usually be advised to register with a GP in your new area.



I registered with a new GP so that I could pick up my insulin locally, and I could also be seen if ever I was unwell. I wasn't sure how at first, but it was easier than I thought.

Tom, living with Type 1 diabetes

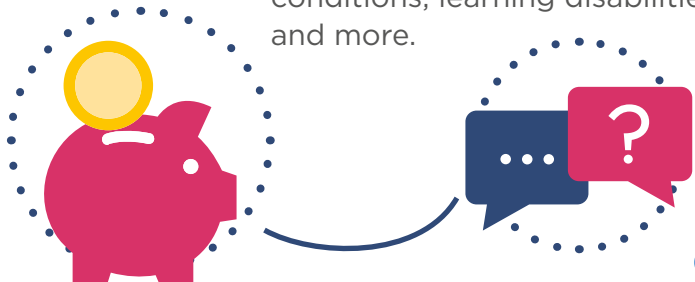
Find out if any financial help is available to you

In addition to other student loans and grants, you may be eligible to receive Disabled Students' Allowance* (DSA) to help with additional costs towards your medical condition whilst studying. You don't repay this so it's worth looking into.

Living with Type 1 diabetes doesn't mean you automatically qualify, but if you do, it's there to help you with additional costs you incur. It can take time to arrange, so apply early. You're able to apply before your uni place is confirmed.

For more information visit the government website www.gov.uk and search *disabled students allowance*.

*the term disability can cover a broad range of needs, examples include physical and mental impairments, medical conditions, learning disabilities and more.



Contact student services at your potential university

Student services is the best place to start when finding out about services that will be available to you at your new university. They can help you with lots of things from advice on how to register with your local GP, or local mental health services, to linking you in with your accommodations officer, or possibly arranging a mini-fridge so that you are able to store your insulin in a cool place. Each one works slightly differently, but all are set up to support you as a student, and usually have very friendly and approachable staff.

Contact the accommodations officer

Many first year students decide to stay in halls of residence, as it's convenient, and a good place to make new friends. They can often offer catered accommodation which may work for you. Alternatively, if you would rather cook your own meals, talk with the accommodations officer, who can advise on the options, so you can choose which best suits your needs. Spaces are sometimes limited and usually first come, first served, so try to get in early.

Connect with your university on social media

This is a great way to keep up with what's going on, and there may be separate accounts to follow such as housing, student's union or different societies. It's a good way to feel part of the community before you move, and stay informed on what's going on when you're there, once Freshers' Fortnight is over.

”

When I was ill during college, they were able to be a bit flexible with my deadlines, so if you're struggling, reach out to your tutor or member of staff you can confide in as, depending on your situation, they may be able to offer more help than you realise.

**Alys, living with
Type 1 diabetes**

#Type1Tips for managing Type 1 diabetes at work

There are very few professions that remain completely out of bounds for people with Type 1 diabetes.

Changes in the law in recent years mean that people living with Type 1 diabetes can now apply to work for the emergency services as police, fire and ambulance staff. This is provided that candidates pass individual assessments and their diabetes management isn't putting them or anyone else at risk or in danger.

Some jobs will carry higher risk, or possibly have a higher impact on your condition, than others. You may need to take this into account when considering which career to pursue.

These jobs may include:

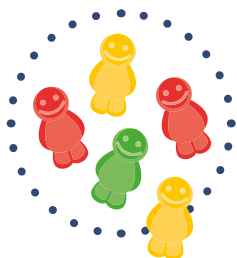
- jobs that are more active and/or physical
- jobs that require driving
- jobs that involve operating heavy machinery
- jobs that require shift work
- jobs that require heavy lifting (for people who have developed advanced retinopathy or heart conditions)

”

I've found jobs require me to manage my diabetes around my work pattern, and some jobs have had a bigger impact than others, especially if I've been on-the-go some days more than others. It was a lot different from my school routine, which was all I'd ever known, but it did get easier when I realised I needed to acknowledge that change and accommodate for it.

Charlie, living with Type 1 diabetes

No matter what profession you are seeking to undertake, if you are worried about anything specific about managing your diabetes and employment, it is worth checking with your diabetes team. They can help you make adjustments or advise you on things you can put in place to support you.



”

I feel telling colleagues I work closely with is important, so is understanding that everyone else will come with varying degrees of understanding of diabetes and a lot of misconceptions and often unhelpful comments. I take time to explain a few signs to look out for if I'm hypo, how to help me if I couldn't help myself and where I keep my hypo stash at work.

**Marc, living with
Type 1 diabetes**

”

I don't talk about my condition much at work, but I understand that seeing me check my blood glucose at my desk does make others want to ask questions sometimes. At lunchtime, or if someone brings in office treats – you can get lots of annoying questions over foods people feel you can/can't eat. People don't usually mean it to come from malice, it's usually a place of intrigue or curiosity, but it can get a bit irritating.

**Dan, living with
Type 1 diabetes**



#Type1Tips for job interviews

What does the law say about telling employers about Type 1 diabetes?

You don't have to tell your employer that you live with Type 1 diabetes, unless the job requires a medical check or medical history. But, in the long term, being open and honest can help, in particular to be able to manage your condition during work hours, treat hypos, take your insulin, or request time off for clinic appointments or diabetes education sessions.

If and when you decide to disclose your diabetes is up to you. Some people disclose it on their application form, some bring it up at interview, others prefer to wait until they have been offered and have accepted a job. You'll know when feels best or most comfortable for you.

It's important to remember that people have varying success at job interviews whether they live with Type 1 diabetes or not. If you're unsuccessful at an interview, you can often ask for feedback about your application and/or interview. This can give helpful tips on how to make improvements for next time. Don't give up on something if you fall at the first hurdle.

'Fall down seven times, stand up eight...'



”

Not getting a job you've applied or interviewed for can be disappointing initially, but each one you apply for is one closer to the one you'll get success at – don't give up.

Louise, living with Type 1 diabetes

Getting job success using your transferable skills

There may be lots of transferable skills and qualities, which you've developed as a result of managing or living with your condition, which would be attractive to a potential employer.

This can include being:

- Ambitious
- Assertive
- Able to analyse data
- Caring
- Dedicated
- Determined
- Driven
- Focused
- Good at communicating with a wide range of people
- Good at decision-making
- Good at problem-solving
- Mature
- Organised
- Punctual
- Resilient

Some of the skills you have developed to manage Type 1 diabetes might just help you land your dream job! Take some time to think about all the things you can do and are good at, even if you don't always feel that way.

”

Employers look for experience, but it feels harder to get experience when you're just starting out on the career ladder. I found taking time out to volunteer for an organisation I was passionate about helped me develop skills I still use in work today, so it can definitely help to open doors to paid employment down the line.

**Chris, living with
Type 1 diabetes**

Understanding the *Equality Act 2010*

The *Equality Act 2010* covers nine protected characteristics, which means it's against the law to discriminate against somebody because of their:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage or civil partnership
- Pregnancy or maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation
- Healthcare settings including hospitals, private clinics and nursing homes
- As a client of a business/organisation including shops, banks and utility companies

(This list is not exhaustive)

How is the *Equality Act 2010* relevant to Type 1 diabetes?

The *Equality Act 2010* requires an employer to make reasonable adjustments for employees (or job applicants) who are disadvantaged as a result of a disability or condition. This means that, as someone living with Type 1 diabetes, you have the same rights as other workers and you are legally protected under this act.

You don't have to consider yourself to have a disability but you are protected and employers have to make reasonable adjustments to allow you to manage your

Some examples of where people are protected from discrimination:

- In the workplace including offices, factories, construction sites
- Educational settings including schools, colleges, universities
- When looking for housing to rent/buy property
- When using transport services such as buses, taxis or trains

condition at work. Examples of this include: taking a short break to treat a hypo, checking blood glucose levels or taking insulin, as well as taking time off for hospital appointments.

The armed forces are exempt from the *Equality Act 2010* so at present there is a blanket ban on people living with Type 1 diabetes from joining the following:

- Naval Service including the Royal Navy and the Royal Marines
- British Army
- Royal Air Force



”

Labels can be a sensitive subject. You don't have to label yourself as anything. Type 1 diabetes is still a condition covered by the *Equality Act 2010*, so that should give people with diabetes more protection in the eyes of the law, when it comes to fairness in the workplace. Sadly, discrimination and stigma does exist, so it's important to understand your rights as a young person, just in case you need to use that information or get additional advice/support.

**Amelia, living with
Type 1 diabetes**

#Type1Tips for dealing with discrimination

Hopefully, when you enter the workplace, or as you change jobs in the future, your experiences will be positive and you'll learn to juggle the demands of work and the demands of managing Type 1 diabetes without many employment issues. But if you feel you are faced with discrimination, it's important you know where you can turn to for advice.

Your situation will be unique to you, so it's difficult to cover all of the information you will need in this booklet. The best thing for you to do would be to do some research and speak to people who can help you.

- Speak to your diabetes team about any concerns. They may point you in the right direction of people, or places, more suited to help you with support or advice

- Familiarise yourself with your rights and responsibilities from trusted sources such as government websites e.g. www.gov.uk or www.citizenadvice.org.uk can help you with specific information on employment rights
- Organisations such as Diabetes UK and JDRF UK have information on their websites and sometimes have additional services that can help with advocacy. This means they can often help you with getting your voice heard, safeguarding your rights, letting you know about specific information and services and help you explore choices and options.



Knowing your rights and responsibilities is important for young people. Discrimination is wrong, whatever age you are.

Bethan, living with Type 1 diabetes

#Type1Tips on independence

Practise at home and help your family

Learn how to cook and carb count your favourite meals, or practise keeping up with house chores. Some of them may effect your blood glucose more than you anticipate. Being mindful of how much your blood glucose can swing with different activities can help you understand your body's needs when you are away from home.

”

It wasn't until I was an adult I realised just how much house chores, like hoovering or painting and DIY can drop my blood glucose. Unfortunately it's not an excuse that can get me out of doing them - nothing a bit of glucose can't sort out, but I didn't expect it.

Osian, living with Type 1 diabetes

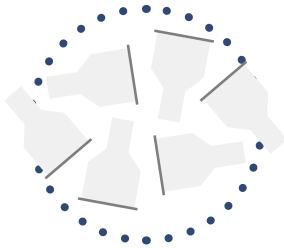
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One of the things I learnt the hard way, was how much of the 'little things' my mum did to join the dots with my diabetes; things I didn't think about like keeping on top of my prescriptions, keeping track of appointments, stocking up my hypo treatment or organise my sharps bin. It's good to get organised and try and stay one step ahead if you can, or you might get caught off guard!

Emi, living with Type 1 diabetes

Tell new people

It doesn't have to be the first thing you start with, but it's a good idea to let those around you know that you live with Type 1 diabetes and what that may mean. Friends or colleagues that you spend most time with may want to know how to spot or help you treat a hypo, or keep an eye on you after a night out. Good friends look out for each other, and Type 1 diabetes shouldn't make that any different.



Take extra care while you find your new routine

New surroundings, new routines, new timetables, new foods or eating times, new sleep patterns and new situations can all take time to adjust your Type 1 diabetes around. When you leave home and start some place new, be mindful of all these changes going on. This may disrupt your previous diabetes routine, and may throw some hurdles your way.



If you're going to be working or studying away from home, make sure you have more than enough supplies to last you the duration to avoid last minute issues and added stress.

Zaheer, living with Type 1 diabetes



Sometimes people ask questions, like if I'm allowed certain foods but it's usually from a place of intrigue than anything else. If people ask, I use this opportunity to educate people - there is a lot of misconceptions about Type 1 diabetes.

Megan, living with Type 1 diabetes



Take note of things that can change your blood glucose

Look for patterns in your blood glucose or learn to see patterns in your blood glucose trend lines if you use CGM or flash technology, as this can help build your knowledge of how your diabetes affects you. Not everyone with Type 1 diabetes reacts in the same way to all of the things that can affect blood glucose levels.

This list is not exhaustive, but things that can affect your blood glucose include:

- Alcohol
- Allergies
- Altitude
- Anxiety
- Caffeine
- Carbohydrate
- Coeliac condition
- Dawn phenomenon
- Dehydration
- Depression
- Exercise
- Fat
- Hormones
- Illness
- Inaccurate blood glucose equipment

- Insulin dose
- Insulin timings
- Issues with diabetes kit eg infusion sets
- Meal timings
- Not enough sleep
- Other medications
- Out of date insulin
- Periods
- Protein and fat in your meal
- Puberty
- Pregnancy
- Recent higher blood glucose level
- Recent hypo
- Scar tissue or lipodystrophy (lumps under the skin)
- Smoking
- Stress
- Temperature

As well as behavioural elements such as the decisions you make around your diabetes management based on your knowledge, your decision making skills, and family and social pressures.

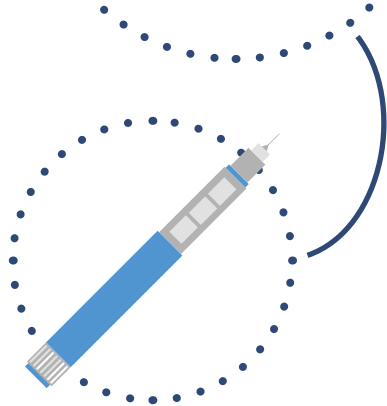
With all of these things to take into account, sometimes it feels incredibly difficult to feel you can achieve the numbers expected of you. But, they are very important.

Upskill yourself on your own diabetes

Every day is a school day.

If you've been living with Type 1 diabetes for a long time it's easy to get complacent about doing things because you've always done them a certain way. If you were diagnosed recently, then it can take time to learn and take in everything that's needed to manage Type 1 diabetes.

Take time to get to know yourself, your body, your treatment and your patterns. If you can, attend education courses to help you brush up on your knowledge as well as meet other people with whom you can share practical tips that can help day to day.



”

Asking for time off from work to attend courses for me was important. I tried to explain that by attending now, I'm less likely to need sick days in the future as I can take better care of my health and be a better employee.

**Heulwen, living with
Type 1 diabetes**

#Type1Tips on talking about Type 1 diabetes

If you find you are struggling to stay motivated with managing your diabetes, or are experiencing any negativity towards how you feel about it, try not to struggle on your own.

There is more awareness of diabetes affecting mental health, and things like diabetes burnout. There may be things that you can do to help yourself – like taking steps towards self-care, talking with your team and letting them know how you feel, accessing talking therapies, diabetes education programmes or connecting with other people in a similar position to you.

That feeling of being understood can be powerful, especially if you've felt isolated or that things are difficult as your life changes. Lots of people feel meeting others for the first time can be daunting, but many end up saying it's a decision they wished they'd been open to earlier.

”

Don't let a bad day turn into a bad week, month, year or three years. Find coping mechanisms to get yourself back on track as soon as possible. Don't be scared to find and ask for help – it is out there, and it's in lots of different places.

Grace, living with Type 1 diabetes

”

Talking to other people who just 'get it' is by far one of the biggest things that has helped me come to terms with managing Type 1 as a young adult.

Gareth, living with Type 1 diabetes

Searching for diabetes hashtags online can open up a new world of people. Try starting with:

- #gbdoc
- #Type1diabetes
- #T1D
- #Type1



REMEMBER to use your own judgement any time you engage with other people living with diabetes online or in person. Because everyone's diabetes varies, you are advised to talk with your diabetes team before making new changes to your own diabetes management.

#Type1Tips on navigating adult services

Adult services have a different set-up to paediatrics so adjusting to this can take some time.

Juggling healthcare appointments around work and education can be tricky, but developing the confidence to ask for time off and ensuring your health is taken care of will help you in the long run. If you really can't attend an appointment, ring up and re-schedule so that they won't expect you. You'll be given a more appropriate date and they can use that slot for someone else.

Developing the confidence to speak up about your health

to healthcare professionals during your appointments ensures you get the best out of your consultations too. Talk to your diabetes team; let them know about the changes in your life which in turn may have an impact on your health. They may have some really useful hints and tips that have worked for others, or alternatively they may be able to offer different options around technology or ways to help you adapt/make changes.

#Type1Tips on dealing with and feeling judged by so many numbers

Re-thinking your blood glucose levels and numbers

Checking your blood glucose is an important part of managing your diabetes but occasionally some people feel an external pressure on them (for good reason) from family members, or healthcare professionals, to achieve numbers that sometimes seem so far out of reach. That pressure can build over time, leaving lots of people feeling overwhelmed.



If you can relate to this, remind yourself that your blood glucose readings are for you. They give you information to use right there and then to help you make decisions to manage your diabetes over the next few hours. Try not to let numbers that are out of target distract you from how important the information they give you is.

”

I aim to be in range as often as possible, but I don't put the pressure on myself to expect to stay there 100% of the time. My blood glucose will swing, but my strength lies in how I manage my Type 1 diabetes when it's out of range. For me that isn't failure, that's a prompt to engage with it and do something to bring me back in range again and learn from how I can do that each time.

Ryan, living with Type 1 diabetes

Longer term, numbers such as your HbA1c, or your time in range, also help your diabetes team to make decisions with you on a treatment plan that's most suited to you. This will need adjusting over time to suit you and your life and/or as treatment develops.

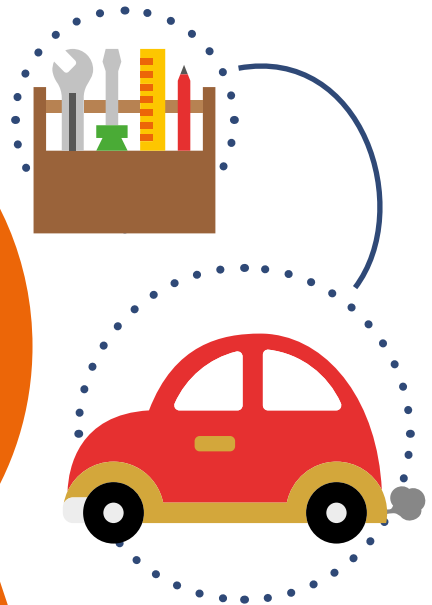
You'll know where your targets are set, but achieving them is a different story.

In everything you do, find a way of making space for your Type 1 diabetes; for example while you study, as you work, if you're about to drive, on nights out, around your hobbies or doing chores and DIY. Whatever you do, or wherever life takes you, take time to work out how you can incorporate looking after your health into that too.



I didn't want to share my high blood glucose results with anyone because it made me feel anxious and I was scared of their reaction. Looking back, that's when I needed to speak with my family and diabetes team the most and ask for extra support.

Ebony, living with Type 1 diabetes



”

I used to hate checking my bloods. I felt it was pointless because of how little my numbers would be where they are expected to be, always too high. Until I changed how I viewed them. Blood glucose levels aren't for my parents, or for my team, they are for me first and I share them with other people for extra support. I still don't get it right all of the time, but since re-thinking how I viewed them; challenging myself for my next one to be lower than the last (if it was slightly higher) and not beating myself up over them, I get more in target range than I felt I could before.

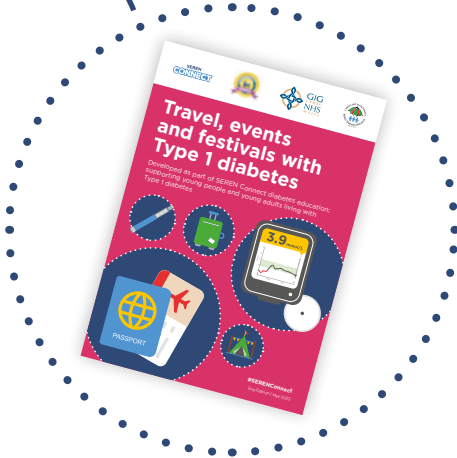
Overtime, thinking blood glucose to blood glucose helped me reduce my HbA1c by half. It took time, and accepting a change in technology but the effort was definitely worth it and I feel so much better. I had to challenge my mindset that had built up over the years, but my life feels so much less overwhelmed by Type 1 now.

**Rhiannon, living with
Type 1 diabetes**



Being a young adult with Type 1 diabetes is difficult but with a mix of hard work, learning, technology, peer support and professionals all included in your diabetes toolbox, you can enjoy your life, your studies, your career and wherever else your life takes you.

You can learn more about becoming independent with Type 1 diabetes by reading the **SEREN Connect: 'Travel, events and festivals with Type 1 diabetes'** booklet.



Notes

Other SEREN Connect Resources

Drinking alcohol with Type 1 diabetes

Developed as part of SEREN Connect diabetes education, supporting young people and young adults living with Type 1 diabetes.

3.9 mmol/L

#SERENConnect
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This infographic features a green background with various icons: a smartphone displaying a blood sugar level of 3.9 mmol/L, a beer mug, a glass of wine, a medical ID card, and a syringe. The SEREN Connect logo and copyright information are at the bottom.

Learning to drive and driving safely with Type 1 diabetes

Developed as part of SEREN Connect diabetes education, supporting young people and young adults living with Type 1 diabetes.

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This infographic features a purple background with icons: a steering wheel, a road sign, a red car, a white 'L' learner sign, and a key. The SEREN Connect logo and copyright information are at the bottom.

Pregnancy, parenting and Type 1 diabetes

Developed as part of SEREN Connect diabetes education, supporting young people and young adults living with Type 1 diabetes.

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This infographic features a teal background with icons: a medical ultrasound screen, a baby, a syringe, a pen, and a clipboard. The SEREN Connect logo and copyright information are at the bottom.

Sex, relationships and Type 1 diabetes

Developed as part of SEREN Connect diabetes education, supporting young people and young adults living with Type 1 diabetes.

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This infographic features a red background with icons: a rainbow flag with a heart, a condom, a syringe, a pill, and a smartphone. The SEREN Connect logo and copyright information are at the bottom.

Travel, events and festivals with Type 1 diabetes

Developed as part of SEREN Connect diabetes education, supporting young people and young adults living with Type 1 diabetes.

3.9 mmol/L

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This infographic features a pink background with icons: a passport, a globe, a smartphone displaying a blood sugar level of 3.9 mmol/L, a syringe, and a medical ID card. The SEREN Connect logo and copyright information are at the bottom.

Understanding Type 1 diabetes, kidney health and nephropathy

Developed as part of SEREN Connect diabetes education, supporting young people and young adults living with Type 1 diabetes.

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This infographic features a purple background with icons: a kidney, a water bottle, a syringe, a smartphone, and a medical ID card. The SEREN Connect logo and copyright information are at the bottom.

Understanding Type 1 diabetes, your eye health and retinopathy

Developed as part of SEREN Connect Diabetes Education, supporting young people with Type 1 diabetes.

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This infographic features a blue background with icons: a pair of glasses, a syringe, a retinopathy diagram, a smartphone, and a medical ID card. The SEREN Connect logo and copyright information are at the bottom.

Understanding Type 1 diabetes, your feet and neuropathy

Developed as part of SEREN Connect diabetes education, supporting young people and young adults living with Type 1 diabetes.

3.9 mmol/L

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This infographic features an orange background with icons: a foot, a syringe, a smartphone displaying a blood sugar level of 3.9 mmol/L, a medical ID card, and a syringe. The SEREN Connect logo and copyright information are at the bottom.