

Dear Roommate:

I am letting you and a few other people around me know that I have type 1 diabetes (juvenile diabetes). Please understand that I do not want or need to be treated differently because of my diabetes, but there are some things I'd like you to know about the condition.

Usually my type 1 diabetes is under control, but sometimes my blood sugar gets too low or too high, which can endanger my health. To keep that from happening, I have to do certain things, like test my blood sugar and (wear an insulin pump/give myself insulin shots). It may help you to understand if I first tell you a little about diabetes.

First of all, please know that **type 1 diabetes is not contagious**. When a person eats a meal, the food is broken down into different substances, is absorbed, and enters the bloodstream. One of these substances is glucose, a sugar. The body cannot function without glucose. In turn, the body cannot use glucose without insulin, which is produced by the pancreas. My pancreas, like that of other people with type 1 diabetes, doesn't produce insulin, so I have to take insulin shots every day. It's mainly insulin, exercise, food, and stress that cause my blood sugar to go up or down.

I do not expect you to have to take care of me, but I do sometimes have low blood sugars or insulin reactions, which might confuse or scare you if you don't understand what's happening. During a reaction, for no apparent reason, you may notice any of these symptoms coming on suddenly:

- confusion
- moodiness
- irritability
- incoherence
- shakiness
- glassy stare

I usually know when my sugar is getting low and can avoid a reaction, but not always. If the low blood sugar persists too long, I may seem sleepy and withdrawn. At these times, I need to drink a sugared drink or eat something from my "low blood sugar food stash" right away. I may not be able to get it myself, so I would appreciate your help, even if I resist. If you don't feel comfortable with that, please call the RA or health services to help me.

Once I have some sugar, I should seem much better within 10-15 minutes. If not, try giving me more food and call one of my contacts listed below.

Low blood sugar can be life threatening to me, so my food stash is like my "medicine" and needs to be kept separate from the food we can share.

Finally--and hopefully this will never happen--if you ever find me unconscious, anytime, including after partying, or if I am sleeping longer than usual and you cannot wake me, I am probably in serious danger. Please call 911.

If you feel uncomfortable about being around the shots and finger pricks, or keeping an eye open for emergencies, I'm happy to talk with you about it. My type 1 diabetes is totally familiar to me but I realize it may take a little time and experience for you to adjust. Believe it or not, in spite of all the challenges that come with diabetes, I am able to lead a pretty "normal" everyday life. Most people won't even know that I have diabetes unless I tell them.

I'm sure you have lots of questions, so let's set a time to talk.

Thanks,

(Signature)

List of contacts to call in case of a low blood sugar reaction:

**Letter from JDRF International

http://www.jdrf.org/index.cfm?page_id=103531