Type 1 Diabetes in Children: CGMs and Insulin Pumps

A continuous glucose monitor, or CGM, and an insulin pump can be effective working partners in caring for your child with type 1 diabetes.

The CGM lets you know the amount of sugar in your blood in real time. And knowing your child's blood sugar—or glucose—level is one of the ways you know how much insulin your child's body needs.

An insulin pump is a small computerized device that delivers insulin into the body through tubing or as a patch on the skin.

Insulin pumps are programmed to deliver precise amounts of insulin in a continuous, basal, dose.
A CGM used with an insulin pump helps your child's blood sugar stay in their target range.

That's because most CGMs can be programmed to send information about blood sugar levels directly to the pump.

And the pump adjusts insulin deliveries based on what the cgm tells it.

The pump can stop or reduce insulin when glucose is lower. And it can deliver more insulin when the glucose is rising.

Depending on the age of your child, you or your child can also use the pump to give a bolus dose of insulin before they eat a meal or snack.

You and your child's doctor will work together to determine the number of units of insulin your child needs throughout the day and before meals or snacks.

It's important to know that a CGM and an insulin pump isn't a "set it and forget it" system.

You and your child will still need to make diabetes management decisions about activity, food, or insulin.

And sometimes you may still need to use a finger-stick test to confirm a glucose level.

Having a CGM and an insulin pump means you'll need to have extra supplies and insulin on hand.

Typically you'll have to add insulin to the pump, and change the parts like tubing and the catheter every 2 to 3 days.

And CGMs will need to be changed too, usually every 10 days or so.

Be sure to follow your doctor's and your supplies manufacturer's directions.

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Remember to have extra insulin (rapid-acting and long-acting), pump supplies, and an insulin syringe or pen on hand for emergencies.

And a back up way to check your child's sugar such as a glucose meter. That way you can still manage your child's blood sugar if something goes wrong with the pump or the cgm.

At first, a CGM and an insulin pump may seem like a lot to manage and think about every day. But it will get easier with time and practice.

These tools and technology give you the information and insulin your child needs to help manage type 1 diabetes and have a happy, healthy life.

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