

# What can a diabetes educator do within their role?

Diabetes Educators may be from quite different clinical disciplines: Registered Nurses, Midwives, Dietitians, Podiatrists, Pharmacists, Doctors, Exercise Physiologists or Physiotherapists. Credentialed Diabetes Educators (CDEs) are Diabetes Educators of any discipline accredited with the Australian Diabetes Educators Association (ADEA). Accreditation ensures that the CDE has met stringent requirements regarding their qualifications, experience, knowledge, and practice.

All Diabetes Educators can provide generic education but education in some tasks such as blood glucose testing and injecting medications will be limited by the clinical scope of practice of CDEs on an individual basis. CDEs will not always be restricted by the usual scope of practice limitations of their primary discipline depending on their own individual specific skills and knowledge.

Most Diabetes Educators are Division One Registered Nurses with additional diabetes education qualifications but this is gradually changing as more clinical disciplines gain the qualifications required to become Diabetes Educators. The scope of practice of Nurse Diabetes Educators includes tasks such as blood glucose testing and injections/ medication support. Some Diabetes Educators from other disciplines may also be able to provide such education if they have gained the necessary skills and knowledge.

## About diabetes and diabetes management

Diabetes is complex, chronic and progressive and can lead to both short term and long term complications. The role of the person with diabetes is pivotal to health outcomes as they are responsible for the many choices they make each day and which contribute to these outcomes. Lifestyle change in particular can be challenging for consumers and difficult to sustain long term yet need to be ongoing.



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## The Role of Diabetes Educators

- The key purpose of Diabetes Educators is to support consumers (and their families and support persons) with their diabetes self-management.
- Diabetes Educators provide comprehensive, individualised assessment, education, support and referral to other disciplines as needed.
- The aim of Diabetes Education is to assist consumers to gain the information, knowledge, skills, motivation and confidence they need to adapt to life with diabetes, manage their condition and make decisions about their care and treatment.
- Diabetes Educators often use health coaching and motivational interviewing to collaboratively work with their consumers to help them achieve their goals.
- Diabetes Educators work collaboratively with other health professionals.
- Consumers may attend individual appointments, group education or a combination of both depending on their needs.
- Consumers who are at risk of diabetes may also benefit from appointments with a Diabetes Educator.
- Diabetes Educators can also work within the community to promote health and will give talks to community groups when invited including education and training for Community Support Workers and volunteers.

Specific areas that Diabetes Educators (depending on their individual scope of practice) can assist consumers with include:

- Maintaining Motivation, Problem Solving and Setting Achievable Goals
- Dealing with Diabetes Burnout and/or Emotional Issues
- Blood Glucose Testing including Interpreting and Understanding Results
- Oral and Injected Diabetes Medications
- Insulin and Insulin Equipment (Syringes, Pens and Insulin Pumps)
- Reducing Blood Glucose Levels (Hyperglycaemia)
- Managing Sick Days and Emergencies
- Dealing with Low Blood Glucose Levels (Hypoglycaemia)
- Exercise, Diet and Weight issues
- Reducing Risks of Diabetes Complications
- Changing Insulin Doses (with medical consent)
- Pregnancy Planning and Management
- Driving, Safety, Identification
- Other areas including Travel Planning, Work Place Issues, Discrimination.

First developed April 2016. Reviewed October 2019.