Accommodation and Compliance Series

A to Z By Disability: Diabetes

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AskJAN.org

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Preface

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JAN does not endorse or recommend any products or services mentioned in this publication. Although every effort is made to update resources, JAN encourages contacting product manufacturers/vendors and service providers directly to ensure that they meet the intended purposes. This guarantees that the most up-to-date information is obtained.

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Updated 08/13/2024.
Introduction

JAN's Accommodation and Compliance Series is designed to help employers determine effective accommodations and comply with Title I of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Each publication in the series addresses a specific medical condition and provides information about the condition, ADA information, accommodation ideas, and resources for additional information.

The Accommodation and Compliance Series is a starting point in the accommodation process and may not address every situation. Accommodations should be made on a case by case basis, considering each employee’s individual limitations and accommodation needs. Employers are encouraged to contact JAN to discuss specific situations in more detail.

For information on assistive technology and other accommodation ideas, visit JAN's Searchable Online Accommodation Resource (SOAR) at https://AskJAN.org/soar.

Information about Diabetes

Diabetes is a disease in which blood glucose levels are above normal. Most of the food we eat is turned into glucose, or sugar, for our bodies to use for energy. The pancreas, an organ that lies near the stomach, makes a hormone called insulin to help glucose get into the cells of our bodies. When you have diabetes, your body either doesn’t make enough insulin or can’t use its own insulin as well as it should. This causes sugar to build up in your blood. Diabetes can cause serious health complications including heart disease, blindness, kidney failure, and lower-extremity amputations.

Type 1 diabetes was previously called insulin-dependent diabetes mellitus (IDDM) or juvenile-onset diabetes. Type 1 diabetes develops when the body’s immune system destroys pancreatic beta cells, the only cells in the body that make the hormone insulin that regulates blood glucose. This form of diabetes usually strikes children and young adults, although disease onset can occur at any age. Type 1 diabetes may account for 5% to 10% of all diagnosed cases of diabetes.

Type 2 diabetes was previously called non-insulin-dependent diabetes mellitus (NIDDM) or adult-onset diabetes. Type 2 diabetes may account for about 90% to 95% of all diagnosed cases of diabetes. It usually begins as insulin resistance, a disorder in which the cells do not use insulin properly. As the need for insulin rises, the pancreas gradually loses its ability to produce insulin. Type 2 diabetes is associated with older age, obesity, family history of diabetes, history of gestational diabetes, impaired glucose metabolism, physical inactivity, and race/ethnicity.

Gestational diabetes is a form of glucose intolerance that is diagnosed in some women during pregnancy. During pregnancy, gestational diabetes requires treatment to
normalize maternal blood glucose levels to avoid complications in the infant. After pregnancy, 5% to 10% of women with gestational diabetes are found to have type 2 diabetes.

Other specific types of diabetes result from specific genetic conditions (such as maturity-onset diabetes of youth), surgery, drugs, malnutrition, infections, and other illnesses.

Healthy eating, physical activity, and insulin injections are the basic therapies for type 1 diabetes. The amount of insulin taken must be balanced with food intake and daily activities. Blood glucose levels must be closely monitored through frequent blood glucose testing.

**Diabetes and the Americans with Disabilities Act**

The ADA does not contain a definitive list of medical conditions that constitute disabilities. Instead, the ADA defines a person with a disability as someone who (1) has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more "major life activities," (2) has a record of such an impairment, or (3) is regarded as having such an impairment. For more information about how to determine whether a person has a disability under the ADA, see How to Determine Whether a Person Has a Disability under the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act (ADAAA).

**Accommodating Employees with Diabetes**

People with diabetes may develop some of the limitations discussed below, but seldom develop all of them. Also, the degree of limitation will vary among individuals. Be aware that not all people with arthritis will need accommodations to perform their jobs and many others may only need a few accommodations. The following is only a sample of the possibilities available. Numerous other accommodation solutions may exist.

**Questions to Consider:**

1. What limitations is the employee experiencing?
2. How do these limitations affect the employee and the employee’s job performance?
3. What specific job tasks are problematic as a result of these limitations?
4. What accommodations are available to reduce or eliminate these problems? Are all possible resources being used to determine possible accommodations?
5. Once accommodations are in place, would it be useful to meet with the employee to evaluate the effectiveness of the accommodations and to determine whether additional accommodations are needed?
6. Do supervisory personnel and employees need training?

Accommodation Ideas:

Limitations

Decreased Stamina/Fatigue

• Accessories for Scooters
• Aide/Assistant/Attendant
• All-Terrain Scooters
• Anti-fatigue Matting
• Elevating Wheelchairs
• Ergonomic and Pneumatic Tools
• Ergonomic Assessments
• Ergonomic Equipment
• Examination and Procedures Chair
• Flexible Schedule
• Head Support for Wheelchairs
• Job Restructuring
• Low Task Chair
• Mechanic's Seats and Creepers
• Multi-Purpose Carts
• Periodic Rest Breaks
• Scooters
• Stand-lean Stools
• Stools for Cutting Hair
• Telework, Work from Home, Working Remotely
• Walkers
• Wearable Anti-fatigue Matting
• Wheelchair Accessible Scales
• Wheelchair Mounts
• Wheelchairs
• Worksite Redesign / Modified Workspace
Dietary Needs
- Flexible Schedule
- Mini Refrigerators/ Electric Coolers
- Policy Modification

Dizziness
- Alerting Devices
- Alternative Lighting
- Fall Protection
- Flexible Schedule
- Modified Break Schedule
- Padded Edging
- Personal Safety and Fall Alert Devices
- Protective Eyewear
- Rollators and Rolling Walkers
- Scooters
- Telework, Work from Home, Working Remotely
- Vehicle Rear Vision System

Memory Loss
- Additional Training Time / Training Refreshers
- Apps for Memory
- Calendars and Planners
- Electronic Organizers
- Job Coaches
- Professional Organizers
- Recorded Directives, Messages, Materials
- Reminders
- Social Skill Builders
- Support Person
- Verbal Cues
- Visual Schedulers
• Written Instructions

Mental Confusion
• Electronic Organizers
• Job Coaches
• Marginal Functions
• On-site Mentoring
• PDAs, Notetakers, and Laptops
• Professional Organizers
• Reminders
• Social Skill Builders
• Supervisory Methods
• Training Modifications
• Written Instructions

Progressive Vision Loss
• Accessible Telephones
• Apps for Individuals with Vision Impairment
• Closed Circuit TV (CCTV)
• Computer Braille Display
• External Computer Screen Magnification
• Head-mounted Magnifiers
• High Visibility Floor Tape and Paint
• Job Restructuring
• Large Button Phones
• Large Visual Display for Telephone
• Lighted Reading Glasses
• Low Vision Enhancement Products
• Low Vision Office Supplies
• Magnification (Hand or Stand)
• Optical Character Recognition (OCR) Systems - Scan
• Portable Video/Electronic Magnifiers
• Screen Magnification and Screen Reading Combined
• Screen Magnification Software
• Service Animal
• Sewing Aids for Individuals with Vision Impairment
• Stair Tread/Textured Tape
• Tactile Graphics & Maps
• Talking Alarm Clocks
• Talking Bar Code Scanner/Reader
• Talking Blood Glucose Monitors
• Talking Blood Pressure Monitors
• Talking Cash Register
• Talking Coin Counter/Sorter
• Talking Color Detector
• Talking Copier
• Talking Credit Card Terminal
• Talking Money Identifier
• Talking Scales
• Talking Telephones
• Talking Watches
• Telework, Work from Home, Working Remotely

Seizure Activity
• Designated Responders
• Disability Awareness/Etiquette Training
• Fall Protection
• Flexible Schedule
• Job Restructuring
• Modified Break Schedule
• Modified Lighting
• Padded Edging
• Plan of Action
• Policy Modification
• Protective Eyewear
• Rolling Safety Ladders
• Rest Area/Private Space
• Telework, Work from Home, Working Remotely
• Workplace Safety

Standing
• Accessories for Scooters
• Adjustable Drafting Tables
• Adjustable Workstations for Industrial Settings
• Adjustable Workstations for Office Settings
• All-Terrain Scooters
• Anti-fatigue Matting
• Assist Lift Cushions
• Elevating Lift and Office Chairs
• Ergonomic and Pneumatic Tools
• Examination and Procedures Chair
• Flexible Schedule
• Grab Bars
• Handheld Computers (General)
• Head Support for Wheelchairs
• Low Task Chair
• Periodic Rest Breaks
• Proper Sitting / Standing Techniques
• Scooters
• Stair Assists
• Stand Aids
• Stand-lean Stools
• Stand-up Wheelchairs
• Stools for Cutting Hair
• Van Conversion
• Wearable Anti-fatigue Matting
• Wheelchair Accessible Scales
• Wheelchair Carts/Trailers
• Wheelchair Mounts
• Wheelchairs

Take Medication
• Additional Training Time / Training Refreshers
• Flexible Schedule
• Medication Reminders
• Policy Modification
• Reminders
• Rest Area/Private Space
• Telework, Work from Home, Working Remotely
• Verbal Cues
• Voice Recorders

Walking
• Anti-fatigue Matting
• Scooters
• Telework, Work from Home, Working Remotely
• Walkers
• Wearable Anti-fatigue Matting
• Walkers with Seats
• Wheelchairs
• Worksite Redesign / Modified Workspace

Work-Related Functions

Policies
• Additional Training Time / Training Refreshers
• Aide/Assistant/Attendant
• Environmental Sound Machines / Tinnitus Maskers / White Noise Machines
• Flexible Schedule
• Marginal Functions
• Modified Break Schedule
• Periodic Rest Breaks
• Physical/Social Distancing Signage
• Policy Modification
• Reassignment
• Service Animal
• Sleep Alerting Devices
• Strobe Lights
• Supervisory Methods
• Support Animal
• Telework, Work from Home, Working Remotely
• Touchless Faucets

Safety Standards
• Aerial Lifts
• Alerting Devices
• Body Protection
• Cut and Puncture Resistant Gloves and Sleeves
• Designated Responders
• Established Routes of Travel for Heavy Equipment/Vehicles
• Fall Protection
• Machine Guards and Shields
• Personal Safety and Fall Alert Devices
• Plan of Action
• Task Rotation
• Steel Toe Shoes & Toe Guards
• Rolling Safety Ladders
• Workplace Safety

Use Cognitive Function
• Additional Training Time / Training Refresher
• Aide/Assistant/Attendant
• Color Coded System
• Counting/Measuring Aids
• Electronic Dictionaries
• Electronic Organizers
• Extra Time
• Fractional, Decimal, Statistical, or Scientific Calculators
• Job Coaches
• Line Guides
• Marginal Functions
• Modified Break Schedule
• On-site Mentoring
• Personal On-Site Paging Devices
• Professional Organizers
• Reassignment
• Reminders
• Service Animal
• Social Skill Builders
• Support Person
• Training Modifications
• Uninterrupted Work Time
Situations and Solutions:

The following situations and solutions are real-life examples of accommodations that were made by JAN customers. Because accommodations are made on a case-by-case basis, these examples may not be effective for every workplace but give you an idea about the types of accommodations that are possible.

A cafeteria worker with diabetes had difficulty standing in one place for long periods of time.
Accommodations included anti-fatigue mats, sit/stand/lean stool, and flexible rest breaks.

A production assembly line worker had symptoms of frequent urination and diabetic neuropathy in his legs.
The employee could not leave his work area except during scheduled breaks.
Accommodation included the use anti-fatigue mat, sit/stand/lean stool, and an in-house paging system to notify the supervisor that a replacement is needed while the employee takes a restroom break.

A paralegal with diabetes was having trouble keeping his blood sugar under control, which led to very bad breath.
He and her employer agreed that he would temporarily be excused from going into court during trials. They agreed to reassess the situation in three weeks, the amount of time his doctor estimated it would take to get his condition under control.

An employer received a request from an employee who disclosed that he had diabetes and needed to modify his break times so he could check his blood sugar levels and administer insulin.
Because diabetes virtually always meets the definition of disability (substantially limits the functions of the endocrine system), the employer did not require medical documentation to show the employee has a covered disability, but instead focused on the need for accommodation.

A retail sales associate with diabetes developed complications that affected the functioning of her kidneys.
She required hemodialysis three times a week. Hemodialysis requires adhering to a fixed schedule. The employee requested a transfer to a store closer to the dialysis center as an accommodation under the ADA, and applied leave under the FMLA, when needed, to receive dialysis.

An employee in a manufacturing plant had difficulty working through an 8-hour shift without a break due to his diabetes.
Typically, employees work straight through. Accommodations were made so that the employee could have a flexible schedule where a break can be provided if employee makes up the time by coming in 15 minutes early and staying 15 minutes later.
A data entry clerk with diabetes was having problems with vision. Her employer installed additional lighting in the file room and purchased a glare filter for her computer monitor to reduce eyestrain.

A nurse with insulin-dependent diabetes and hypoglycemia was having problems regulating her condition (specifically, eating regularly while at work). Her schedule was altered by eliminating the evening rotation until her blood glucose levels could be controlled on a consistent basis.

An investigator was having problems balancing between reading text and his computer screen due to diabetic retinopathy. Accommodations were made so he could use task lighting, a glare filter for computer monitor, and closed circuit television with a split screen to view text and the computer monitor at same time.

A social worker with Type 2 diabetes was experiencing vision loss. The individual requested a reduced workload. The employer contacted JAN looking for alternatives to lowering productivity standards. JAN suggested stand magnification equipment for reading print materials and screen magnification software for reading from the computer screen.

**Products**

There are numerous products that can be used to accommodate people with limitations. JAN's Searchable Online Accommodation Resource at [https://AskJAN.org/soar](https://AskJAN.org/soar) is designed to let users explore various accommodation options. Many product vendor lists are accessible through this system; however, JAN provides these lists and many more that are not available on the Web site upon request. Contact JAN directly if you have specific accommodation situations, are looking for products, need vendor information, or are seeking a referral.
Resources

Job Accommodation Network
West Virginia University
PO Box 6080
Morgantown, WV 26506-6080
Toll Free: (800) 526-7234
TTY: (304) 293-7186
Fax: (304) 293-5407
jan@askjan.org
https://askjan.org

The Job Accommodation Network (JAN) is a free consulting service that provides information about job accommodations, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and the employability of people with disabilities.

American Association of Diabetes Educators
200 W. Madison Street
Suite 800
Chicago, IL 60606
Toll Free: (800) 338-3633
info@diabeteseducator.org
http://www.diabeteseducator.org

The AADE is a multi-disciplinary professional membership organization dedicated to advancing the practice of diabetes self-management training and care as integral components of health care for persons with diabetes and lifestyle management for the prevention of diabetes.

American Diabetes Association
1701 North Beauregard Street
Alexandria, VA 22311
Toll Free: (800) 342-2383
AskADA@diabetes.org
http://www.diabetes.org/
The American Diabetes Association is the nation’s leading nonprofit health organization providing diabetes research, information and advocacy.

**American Dietetic Association**  
120 South Riverside Plaza,  
Suite 2000  
Chicago, IL 60606  
Toll Free: (800) 877-1600  
Direct: (312) 899-0040  
knowledge@eatright.org  
http://www.eatright.org

ADA members are the most valued source of food and nutrition services.

**American Heart Association**  
7272 Greenville Avenue  
Dallas, TX 75231  
Toll Free: (800) 242-8721  
Review.personal.info@heart.org  
http://www.heart.org/HEARTORG/

The American Heart Association is dedicated to providing education and information on fighting heart disease and stroke. Our mission is to build healthier lives, free of cardiovascular diseases and stroke. That single purpose drives all we do.

**American Occupational Therapy Association**  
6116 Executive Boulevard, Suite 200  
North Bethesda, MD 20852-4929  
Direct: (301) 652-6611  
members@aota.org  
https://www.aota.org/

The American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA) is the national professional association established in 1917 to represent the interests and concerns of occupational therapy practitioners and students of occupational therapy and to improve the quality of occupational therapy services.
American Orthopaedic Foot & Ankle Society
9400 West Higgins Road
Suite 220
Rosemont, IL 60018-4975
Toll Free: (800) 235-4855
aofasinfo@aofas.org
https://www.aofas.org

American Orthopaedic Foot & Ankle Society's FootCareMD is your source for reliable information on foot and ankle conditions and treatments. All content was developed and peer reviewed by orthopaedic surgeons specializing in foot and ankle surgery. FootCareMD is overseen by the AOFAS Public Education Committee and maintained by AOFAS staff.

American Physical Therapy Association

MoveForwardPT.com is the official consumer information website of the American Physical Therapy Association.

Association of Late Deafened Adults
8038 MacIntosh Lane
Rockford, IL 61107
Direct: (815) 332-1515
info@alda.org
http://www.alda.org/

A resource center providing information and referrals, self-help, and support groups for people deafened as adults.
Their mission is to support the empowerment of deafened people.
The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention are dedicated to protecting the health and safety of people - at home and abroad, providing credible information to enhance health decisions, and promoting health through strong partnerships.

Diabulimia Helpline
Direct: (425) 985-3635
info@diabulimiahelpline.org
http://www.diabulimiahelpline.org/

A non-profit organization dedicated to education, support, and advocacy for diabetics with eating disorders, and their loved ones.

Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development
31 Center Drive
Building 31, Room 2A32
Bethesda, MD 20892-2425
Toll Free: (800) 370-2943
Fax: (866) 760-5947
NICHDInformationResourceCenter@mail.nih.gov
http://www.nichd.nih.gov/Pages/index.aspx

The mission of the NICHD is to ensure that every person is born healthy and wanted, that women suffer no harmful effects from reproductive processes, and that all children have the chance to achieve their full potential for healthy and productive lives, free from disease or disability, and to ensure the health, productivity, independence, and well-being of all people through optimal rehabilitation.
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The Genetic and Rare Diseases (GARD) Information Center is a program of the National Center for Advancing Translational Sciences (NCATS) and funded by two parts of the National Institutes of Health (NIH): NCATS and the National Human Genome Research Institute (NHGRI). GARD provides the public with access to current, reliable, and easy to understand information about rare or genetic diseases in English or Spanish.
JDRF funds research that transforms the lives of people with type 1 diabetes (T1D). We want a cure, and we won’t stop until we find one. Along the way, we will continue to drive scientific progress that delivers new treatments and therapies that make day-to-day life with T1D easier, safer and healthier.

**Mayo Clinic**
13400 E. Shea Blvd.
Scottsdale, AZ 85259
Direct: (480) 301-8000

The Mayo Clinic's mission to inspire hope and contribute to health and well-being by providing the best care to every patient through integrated clinical practice, education and research.

**MedlinePlus**
8600 Rockville Pike
Bethesda, MD 20894
custserv@nlm.nih.gov
[https://medlineplus.gov](https://medlineplus.gov)

MedlinePlus is the National Institutes of Health’s Web site for patients and their families and friends. Produced by the National Library of Medicine, the world’s largest medical library, it brings you information about diseases, conditions, and wellness issues in language you can understand. MedlinePlus offers reliable, up-to-date health information, anytime, anywhere, for free.

**National Center for Biotechnology Information**
8600 Rockville Pike
Bethesda, MD 20894
pubmedcentral@ncbi.nlm.nih.gov

The National Center for Biotechnology Information advances science and health by providing access to biomedical and genomic information.
The National Eye Institute’s Office of Science Communications, Public Liaison and Education responds directly to requests for information on eye diseases and vision research in English and Spanish.

The National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI) provides leadership for a national program in diseases of the heart, blood vessels, lung, and blood.

The National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases conducts and supports research on many of the most serious diseases affecting public health. The Institute supports much of the clinical research on the diseases of internal medicine and related subspecialty fields as well as many basic science disciplines.
At NIA, our mission is to discover what may contribute to a healthy old age as well as to understand and address the disease and disability sometimes associated with growing older. In pursuit of these goals, our research program covers a broad range of areas, from the study of basic cellular changes that occur with age to the examination of the biomedical, social, and behavioral aspects of age-related conditions, including Alzheimer’s disease.

National Jewish Health is known worldwide for treatment of patients with respiratory, cardiac, immune and related disorders, and for groundbreaking medical research. Founded in 1899 as a nonprofit hospital, National Jewish Health remains the only facility in the world dedicated exclusively to these disorders. "U.S. News & World Report" has ranked National Jewish Health as the number one or number two hospital in pulmonology on its Best Hospitals list ever since pulmonology was included in the rankings.
The National Kidney Foundation, Inc., a major voluntary health organization, seeks to prevent kidney and urinary tract diseases, improve the health and well-being of individuals and families affected by these diseases, and increase the availability of all organs for transplantation.

NORD is a unique federation of voluntary health organizations dedicated to helping people with rare "orphan" diseases and assisting the organizations that serve them. NORD is committed to the identification, treatment, and cure of rare disorders through programs of education, advocacy, research, and service.

Office on Women’s Health
Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue, SW Room 712E
Washington, DC 20201
Toll Free: (800) 994-9662
Direct: (202) 690-7650
Fax: (202) 205-2631
http://www.womenshealth.gov/
The Office on Women’s Health (OWH), part of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), works to improve the health and sense of well-being of all U.S. women and girls. OWH serves as the focal point for women’s health activities across HHS offices and agencies and leads HHS efforts to ensure that all women and girls achieve the best possible health.

Remedy’s Health Communities
http://www.healthcommunities.com

Remedy Health Media is America’s fastest growing health information and technology company. We are a leading provider of clinical resources and wellness tools that help millions of patients and caregivers live healthier, more fulfilled lives.

Our mission is to empower patients and caregivers with the information and applications needed to efficiently navigate the healthcare landscape and as a result, to permit better health outcomes through use of our products and services.

The Foundation for Peripheral Neuropathy
485 Half Day Road
Suite 350
Buffalo Grove, IL 60089
Toll Free: (877) 883-9942
Fax: (847) 883-9960
info@tffpn.org
https://www.foundationforpn.org/

The Foundation for Peripheral Neuropathy is a Public Charity committed to fostering collaboration among today’s most gifted and dedicated neuroscientists and physicians. These specialists from around the country will help us maintain a comprehensive view of the field and determine the research areas that hold the most promise in neuropathy research and treatment to develop new and effective therapies that can reverse, reduce and one day eliminate Peripheral Neuropathy. It is our ultimate goal to utilize every means and opportunity to dramatically improve the lives of those living with this painful and debilitating disorder.
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
Toll Free: (844) 698-2311
http://www.va.gov/

The Agency is responsible for providing employment, training, educational and reemployment rights information and assistance to veterans, and other military personnel who are preparing to transition from the military. Also provide hearing aids. All World War I veterans are eligible to receive free hearing aids. Other veterans can receive free hearing aids if their hearing loss is at least 50% service-related.

Vascular Cures
555 Price Avenue
Suite 180
Redwood City, CA 94063
Direct: (650) 368-6022
info@vascularcures.org
http://vascularcures.org

Vascular Cures is the only 501(c)3 nonprofit organization representing the millions of patients with Vascular Disease in the U.S. We focus on creating long-term, shared resources to accelerate development of new treatments and improve patient health.

World Health Organization
525 Twenty-third Street
N.W.
Washington, DC 20037
Direct: (202) 974-3000
Fax: (202) 974-3663
http://www.who.int/en/

We are the directing and coordinating authority on international health within the United Nations’ system.
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