

# DKA SYMPTOMS

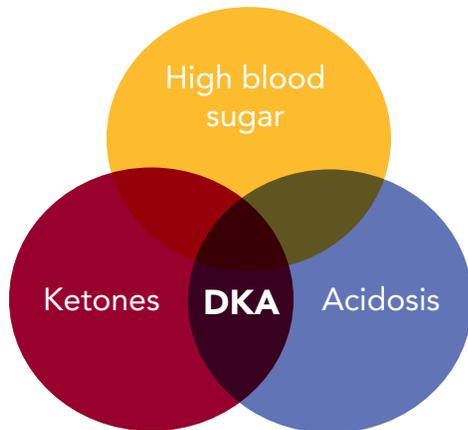
Common presenting symptoms include:

- High blood sugar and ketones
- Increased urination and thirst
- Dehydration and weight loss
- Headache and dizziness
- Nausea, vomiting and belly pain
- Fruity breath (caused by ketones)

Untreated DKA can lead to:

- Dizziness and confusion
- Severe dehydration
- Unconsciousness
- Cerebral edema (swelling of the brain)
- Death

**If you have signs of DKA, seek medical attention immediately!**



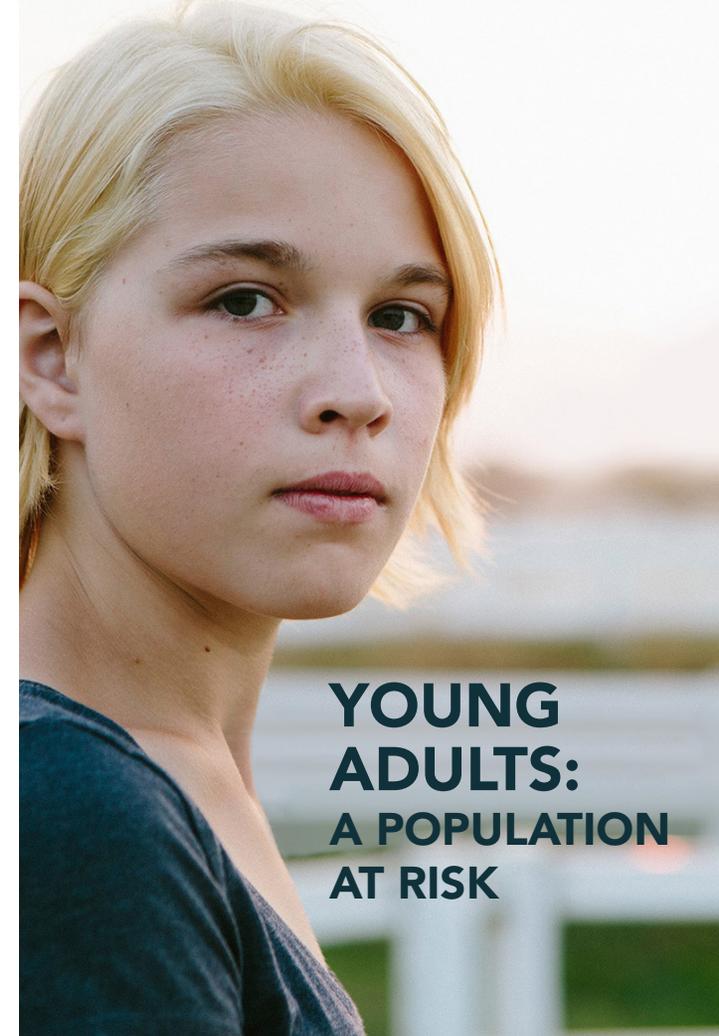
## DKA IS PREVENTABLE

For an informative video on DKA visit:  
[https://youtu.be/NwBzGfKY\\_gE](https://youtu.be/NwBzGfKY_gE)

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# DIABETIC KETOACIDOSIS



**YOUNG  
ADULTS:  
A POPULATION  
AT RISK**

**THE LEADING CAUSE OF SERIOUS  
ILLNESS AND DEATH IN YOUNG  
ADULTS WITH DIABETES.**

## DIABETES AND DKA

Newfoundland and Labrador has the highest rates of type 1 diabetes in North America. Young adults (aged 20-25 years) have the highest rates of DKA.

DKA is an acute and life threatening complication of diabetes. When the body doesn't have enough insulin it uses fat instead of sugar for energy. This mechanism results in the buildup of ketones, which are poisonous in the body at high levels.

### Reasons why DKA can be a problem for your young adult:

- Undiagnosed diabetes can lead to DKA.
- The transition from pediatric to adult health care for youth who already have diabetes can be a high-risk period.
- Moving away from the parental home for schooling or work also may increase risk.
- The loss of parental guidance and adapting to new routines can add stress.
- Substance abuse is more common and can lead to high blood sugars and DKA.
- Mental health issues such as anxiety, depression and eating disorders can occur with DKA.

Recommendations for young adults to reduce the risk of DKA during transition:

- It is important to stay informed about factors affecting diabetes and how to prevent DKA.
- Have a plan for sick-days and understand the steps to take if you have high blood sugars with ketones.
- Never stop taking your insulin unless instructed by your diabetes doctor or nurse.
- During times of illness or other stress, insulin requirements may increase.
- If blood sugars are high, check for ketones and know the type and how much extra insulin to take.
- If you use an insulin pump understand how to troubleshoot insulin delivery problems as DKA can develop faster.
- Understand the risks of alcohol and substance use and how they can affect your diabetes.
- Seek help if you are struggling with symptoms of anxiety, depression, or other mental health issues.
- Maintain clinic attendance after the transition to adult care to ensure good diabetes health.
- If possible, stay with the same family physician after transition to make the process smoother.



## PARENTS CAN HELP...

1. Slowly give your adolescent more independence with their diabetes care starting in the early teen years.
2. Talk to your teen/young adult about the transition process and learn how your help and encouragement can make the process go smoothly.
3. It is important to talk about sensitive topics such as alcohol and recreational drug use and how this can affect diabetes.
4. Ask your teen's diabetes health care professional how you can help prepare your teen for young adulthood.

