

Practice Alert

WaterlooWellington
D I A B E T E S

To: Health Care Professionals in Waterloo Wellington Region

Published By: Waterloo Wellington Diabetes on behalf of the Regional Diabetes Networks

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Re: **Recognizing New Onset Type 1 Diabetes**

Background

New-onset type 1 diabetes (T1D) can present at any age and may initially resemble other common medical conditions. Regional diabetes clinicians have identified recent cases across the Waterloo Wellington region in which new-onset T1D in both children and adults was not immediately recognized or was initially misclassified, delaying appropriate treatment. These cases serve as a reminder to consider T1D regardless of age or presentation, as early recognition and assessment are important to reduce the risk of diabetic ketoacidosis (DKA) and other life threatening complications.

Clinical Features Suggestive of Type 1 Diabetes

- Polyuria, polydipsia, nocturia or new-onset enuresis
- Unexplained weight loss with increased hunger
- Fatigue, weakness
- Irritability or mood changes
- Blurred vision
- Recurrent candidiasis, urinary tract infections, other infections
- Hyperglycemia
- Positive urine or blood ketones

Symptoms of Diabetic Ketoacidosis

- Nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain
- Deep or rapid breathing, fruity/acetone breath odour
- Dehydration
- Altered mental status, confusion or excessive drowsiness
- Hyperglycemia
- Positive urine or blood ketones

T1D can occur at any age. Do not exclude T1D based on age, BMI, and/or family history of type 2 diabetes. If T1D is clinically suspected, do not delay urgent hospital evaluation while awaiting confirmatory testing. Primary care providers play a critical role in the early recognition of T1D. Identifying early clinical features or signs of DKA and directing patients for urgent assessment at the nearest emergency department is considered best clinical practice when T1D is suspected.

Waterloo Wellington Diabetes is a resource for healthcare providers managing patients with diabetes. If needed, experienced CDE triage clinicians are available to discuss complex clinical scenarios and referral options to connect patients with appropriate diabetes services - Monday to Friday 8:30 am-4:30 pm. **Call 1-844-204-9088.**

Sincerely,
Waterloo Wellington Diabetes on behalf of the Regional Diabetes Networks

References:

1. Halperin IJ, Wicklow B, Amed S et al. *Glycemic Management Across the Lifespan for People with Type 1 Diabetes: A Clinical Practice Guideline*. Can J Diabetes 2025;49: 5-18.
2. Goguen J and Gilbert J. *Diabetes Canada 2018 Clinical Practice Guidelines for the Prevention of Management of Diabetes in Canada: Hyperglycemic Emergencies in Adults*. Can J Diabetes 2018;42(Suppl 1): S109-S114.