

## Chapter 17

# Family Concerns



Diabetes is a family disease. This means that all family members must help. The children who do best with their diabetes have the help and support of their parents and family members.

- It is important for children with diabetes to be treated just like other children. A good rule to follow is:

**THINK OF THE CHILD FIRST AND THEN THE DIABETES.**

- It is important that all family members share their feelings (see Chapter 10).
- Siblings often feel left out when the child with diabetes needs more attention.
- This should be discussed with the other children and time should be set aside for them as well.
- Perhaps the most supportive and loving act that parents, brothers and sisters can make for the person with diabetes is to remove high-sugar foods (candy, sugar pop, donuts, cookies, etc.) from the home. These foods have little nutritional value. If they are around, they may be eaten without taking extra insulin, which will raise the blood sugar.

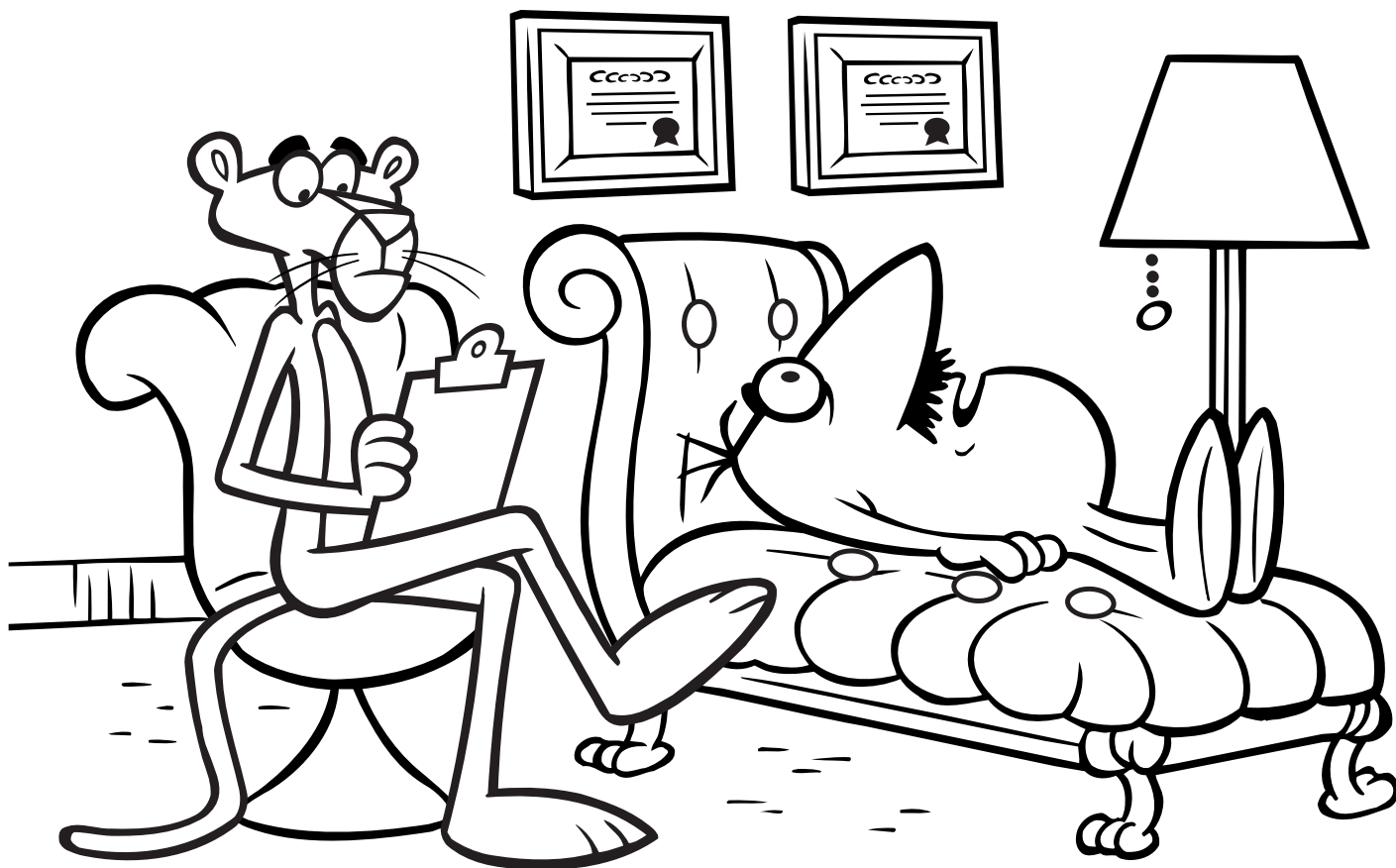
## SPECIFIC AREAS OF CONCERN

- 1** The stress of the diagnosis of diabetes is real for all family members.  
One of the four big influences on blood sugar levels is stress (see Chapter 14). The social worker or psychologist is available to help in dealing with stress.
- 2** Extra excitement and activity may cause a low blood sugar in children with diabetes. Some of these activities can include:
  - family picnics
  - sleepovers
  - trips to the beach or hiking
  - school field days or trips
  - a trip to Disney® or other theme parks
  - special days such as Christmas or Hanukkah

Thinking ahead and reducing the insulin dose and giving extra snacks may result in a better day for everyone. Wearing an ID bracelet is particularly important on trips.

**3** Needle fears occur in about one-fourth of all people. The psychosocial team may be helpful, particularly in suggesting distractions (TV, toys, books) or relaxation techniques. The Inject-Ease device (B-D) or the use of the Insuflon (Chapter 9) is also sometimes helpful.

**4** Missed shots (or insulin boluses for the pumper) result in an elevated HbA<sup>1c</sup> level and an increased risk for diabetic complications. Help from other family members, teachers or friends may be needed.

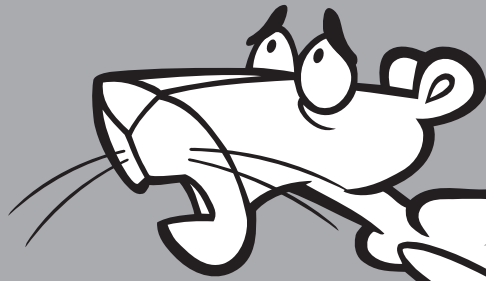


Social workers and psychologists are there to help you.



Think of the child first  
and THEN the diabetes.

$$2+2=$$



High or low  
blood sugars  
may affect school  
performance.

