How can I manage my diabetes while in college?

Going off to college is an exciting time in your life. With busy college preparation, here are some pointers to keep your diabetes control on target while you are at school.

- Be sure to check with your insurance company about your new college status to make sure your coverage has not changed.
- Bring all diabetes supplies as well as glucagon, extra glucose meter, extra insulin, sick day guidelines, ketone strips, thermometer, sharps containers, ready glucose sources (juice boxes, glucose tablets etc.)
- After meeting your roommate(s), it is beneficial to inform them of your diabetes, your daily routine, the dangers of low blood sugar, and how to recognize it. (Instructing them on how to give glucagon and call 911 is highly recommended as well).
- Having close follow-up with your Adult Endocrinologist, as well as your Primary Medical Doctor is recommended. It is important to know where the local Emergency Department, Student Health Services, and a pharmacy are located in case you need to use these services during the school year.
- Alcohol is present in the lives of college students. It is important to remember that alcohol can have a delayed effect on lowering your blood sugar. It is best to eat some form of carbohydrate when consuming alcohol.
- Smoking can also have a harmful effect on people with diabetes, and may increase the threshold for all complications of diabetes. It’s also not good for your lungs.
Most of all it is important to remember college is full of new experiences that can be very rewarding. While pursuing your dreams it is important to remember to make diabetes control a priority in your life. Have fun and be safe!

Excerpt from: Mellinger, D.C. Preparing Students With Diabetes for Life at College. 
Diabetes Care September 2003 26:2675-2678.