

## Diabetes

### Can someone with diabetes play rugby?

Physical activity, such as playing rugby, can have positive effects for people with diabetes. Improving fitness and wellbeing, controlling weight, increasing energy levels and relieving stress can reduce the risk of type 2 diabetes. Participating in exercise can help increase the amount of glucose used by the muscles for energy, so it may sometimes lower blood glucose levels. It can also enable the body to use insulin more efficiently, and potentially reduce the amount of insulin that people have to take, providing benefits to both type 1 and type 2 diabetics.



Before participating in any rugby union activity, an individual with diabetes should seek medical advice. If under 18 the player's parents/guardians should be asked by the club or school to confirm in writing that their child has been medically cleared to play. An adult player should also inform their club, with a record being kept. In all cases it is important that there is communication between the player, parent/guardian(s), coaches and first aiders so that everyone is clear what (if any) particular precautions need to be taken to manage insulin/blood sugar levels during rugby games or training.

### Can someone with a diabetic insulin pump play rugby?



It is advisable to seek medical advice before participating in any rugby union activity. The player/parent/guardian(s) should speak with their specialist to explain exactly what activities they will be undertaking and follow the advice given.

It may be possible for the player to remove the pump and secure and protect the indwelling catheter to enable them to participate; but this must be confirmed by the diabetic nurse, who will be able to advise on the best way to do this, as well as confirming if it is indeed possible with the particular device used by the individual. They should also advise on what other arrangements need to be made, given that the individual would be undertaking prolonged activity without the delivery of insulin.

It is important to consider the potential damage that may be caused to the device, as well as the potential that the device (particularly if broken) could cause to the individual or another players in a contact situation - the World Rugby regulations do not allow any rigid materials onto the rugby pitch for this reason (see [World Rugby Law 4](#)) so it may be necessary to talk to their medical specialists about the activities undertaken in more detail.

### Further Information



For further information on diabetes please visit [Diabetes UK](#).

The NHS provides comprehensive health information and guidance. Call 111 for non-emergency medical advice or visit the [NHS website](#).



*Any advice provided by the RFU in relation to specific injuries, illnesses or disabilities is only general advice and it should not be used as a substitute for the individual advice patients receive when they consult their own doctor. Individuals are advised to consult their own General Practitioner or Hospital Consultant for specific advice on their condition and/or fitness to train for or play rugby.*