

# Who Gets DKA?

Understanding where the real risk lives — so fear doesn't run your life

## At Diagnosis — Children

# 30–38%

of children in the US present with DKA at the time of type 1 diagnosis

*SEARCH for Diabetes in Youth Study, PMC 2021*

### Why it's so common here:

T1D is often unrecognized until crisis hits. Symptoms often mimic other childhood illnesses.

### Highest risk:

Children under 4. They rely entirely on caregivers to recognize symptoms that are easy to miss.

### The rate is rising:

Increasing approximately 2% per year since 2010. Socioeconomic factors and delayed access to care are primary drivers.

*SEARCH for Diabetes in Youth Study, PMC 2021*

**Once diagnosed and managed, the risk picture changes significantly. Engaged families are a protective factor.**

## Teenagers and Young Adults

# up to 30%

of young women with T1D underuse their insulin for weight control

*Bryden et al., Diabetes Care, 1999 (foundational longitudinal study)*  
*Hall et al., J Health Psychology, 2021 (systematic review)*

### What's actually happening:

At its heart, this is an eating disorder that expresses itself through insulin. Known as diabulimia or ED-DMT1.

### Who is most affected:

Girls and young women disproportionately. Women and girls with T1D are 2.4x more likely to develop an eating disorder than peers.

*Jones et al., BMJ, 2000*

### Recurrent DKA:

Eating disorders contribute to approximately 20% of recurrent DKA in young T1D patients.

*Endotext / NIH 2025*

**Diabulimia requires mental health support, not just diabetes management.**

## Adults Managing Long-Term

# ~4–5%

annual rate — general US adult T1D population  
*Journal of Diabetes and Its Complications, 2021*

**Dropping toward <1% in long-term closely managed cohorts**

*Fazeli Farsani et al., BMJ Open, 2017*

### The trend tells the real story:

The data suggest that better management and more experience lead to lower DKA incidence.

### When it happens in adults:

#### **Illness / infection**

Most common trigger  
*ADA Consensus Report, Diabetes Care, 2024*

#### **Insulin omission or rationing**

18.6% of T1D adults ration their insulin due to cost  
*Annals of Internal Medicine, 2022*

#### **Pump Delivery Failure**

This graphic is for educational purposes only and does not constitute medical advice. Always consult your care team.