

DAFNE

stands for Dose Adjustment For Normal Eating

DAFNE is a five-day diabetes education program for adults with type 1 diabetes. People attend the course in groups of 6 to 8, and together you learn the skills to calculate how much insulin you need for the amount of carbohydrate in the food you want to eat. The program covers carbohydrate counting and adjusting insulin doses, as well as how to manage exercise, illness and hypoglycaemia. This allows more freedom in your lifestyle at the same time as improving your diabetes control.

The DAFNE program has now been evaluated in a number of countries. Participants have seen improvements in a variety of key diabetes management areas. The following benefits have been shown in both Australia and the United Kingdom:

- Improved HbA1c (blood glucose control)
- Reduced diabetes distress, depression and anxiety symptoms
- Increased dietary freedom
- No weight gain
- No increase in blood fats
- No increase in severe hypoglycaemia (In Australian studies of DAFNE we have found that severe hypoglycaemia has been reduced).

The DAFNE program covers three main areas:

1. Carbohydrate counting

This section teaches you how to estimate the amount of carbohydrate in the food you want to eat and then match this with an appropriate insulin dose. There are practical exercises using real food, photographs of food, food models and food packets that allow you to practice what you have learned. The nutrition topics also include snacks, recipes, eating out, alcohol and sweeteners.

2. Insulin dose adjustment

DAFNE uses a basal-bolus regimen where food is covered by quick-acting insulin. You are taught how to check if your background (basal) insulin dose is correct, and how to adjust your quick-acting (bolus) insulin dose to match the amount of carbohydrate in the food you want to eat at each meal. You will be asked to check your blood glucose levels before each main meal and before bed.

Some people are already adjusting their own insulin doses. However, they may be basing their decisions on their blood glucose levels alone rather than also taking into account what they eat. DAFNE teaches carbohydrate counting skills that take the guesswork out of insulin dose adjustment. This lets you quickly build up the confidence to make changes to your doses as needed.

Confidence in adjusting your insulin is not the only benefit of going to a DAFNE course. There are many other topics covered during the five days including:

- How to manage hypoglycaemia.
- How to manage illness.
- How to adjust insulin for sport and exercise.

- Preventing complications.

People who have done the course also say that one of the best things they got out of the program was the chance to meet others with type 1 diabetes and share their experiences.

The standard target DAFNE blood glucose levels are:

Before meals	4.0 to 8.0 mmol/L
Before bed	6.0 to 8.0 mmol/L
Before driving	5.0 mmol/L or more
Before exercise	7.0 mmol/L or more
At 3 am	5.0 mmol/L or more

If you have impaired awareness of hypoglycaemia or retinopathy, we may ask you to use the upper end of these targets initially.

3. Other topics

The course also covers other topics like managing hypoglycaemia, exercise, illness, diabetes complications and goal setting. This makes it a truly comprehensive type 1 diabetes self-management program.

To see what the program involves in action, check out the video below (put together by Diabetes UK) of participants doing the UK DAFNE course in South-East London [UK participant video](#)