

## Cost

There are two types of DAD providers. Not-for-profit organizations provide dogs at a very low cost, sometimes for free, but the waiting lists for a dog are generally 2-5 years. For-profit companies price dogs based on the hours of training required and have much shorter wait times. The average professionally trained alert dog costs about \$20,000. Unfortunately, insurance companies do not cover service dogs. To offset this cost, some people have been successful in reducing their cost by fundraising. Others have trained their dog themselves. You can find more information online by searching for Diabetic Alert Dogs.



## Scientific Studies <sup>(4)</sup>

DADs have proven to be very accurate in detecting high or low sugar levels. According to a study published in the journal Diabetes Care, owners of DADs reported the following benefits:

- ❖ **61% decreased worry about hypoglycemia & hyperglycemia**
- ❖ **75% improved quality of life**
- ❖ **75% enhanced ability to participate in physical activities**
- ❖ **Significant decreases in frequency of severe & moderate hypoglycemia**

## Resources

- (1) [www.Diabetesforecast.org](http://www.Diabetesforecast.org)  
[www.blackdogsrule.com](http://www.blackdogsrule.com)
- (2) [www.healthline.com](http://www.healthline.com)
- (3) [www.scentangels.com](http://www.scentangels.com)
- (4) [www.care.diabetesjournals.org](http://www.care.diabetesjournals.org)  
[www.assisteddogsinternational.org](http://www.assisteddogsinternational.org)  
[www.dogs4diabetics.com](http://www.dogs4diabetics.com)

## Acknowledgements

This brochure was created by the First Lego League JP2 Programmers team, as part of their real world solution for the 2016 ANIMAL ALLIES Challenge competition.

We hope this brochure will raise awareness of DADs and save lives!



*We want to thank our coaches, mentors, medical teams, DAD owners and providers, diabetic friends, and our families for their support.*

## Diabetic Alert Dogs



## Can Save Your Life!

A Diabetic Alert Dog (DAD) is a trained service dog trained to alert diabetic handlers in advance of low (hypoglycemia) or high (hyperglycemia) blood sugar events before they become dangerous. The Diabetic Alert Dogs early detection allows the handler to take the proper steps to return their blood sugar to a normal range. A diabetic alert dog is NOT a replacement for a glucose monitor or testing strips, the DAD is an extra level of protection as well as a lovable, cuddly and helpful companion.

## *Who trains DADs? (1)*

There are several dog-training programs around the country. “Word of mouth” is the best indicator of a good trainer. Here are a few guidelines to help you become informed.

**A dog’s age matters.** Puppies can learn the basics of scent-based alerting, but becoming a service dog takes months of full-time training, socialization, and exposure to a variety of situations. Beware of any organization offering a DAD younger than 1 1/2 years.

**The type of alert is crucial.** Most organizations train dogs to nudge or bring an object to alert of a critical change in blood glucose levels. The dogs should not be trained to perform an action that can be problematic when in public (barking) or that can be confused with normal behavior (rubbing against a leg).

**Ongoing assessment is essential.** Any reputable organization will provide follow-up for at least six months to a year after the placement as part of the cost and will be available for any re-training throughout the dog’s life.

**Application process is very selective.** A professional trainer will be selective if they truly care about the best interest of the diabetic, the dog, and the family.

**Partnership with support groups.** Watch out for organization spending a lot of resources “self-promoting” in Facebook groups, especially to diabetic support groups. How much of their on-line interaction in these groups freely offers help and information to others in need v.s. offering to charge for help.

**Training is very diverse.** Currently, there are no standardized training methods, so success depends on many factors. Many programs charge large sums for training a dog. Few provide any guarantee of the dog’s skills over their lives. Many do not provide adequate training or support. Some place puppies or rescued dogs that do not have the maturity or obedience for public access or the necessary trained skills required to perform consistently or reliably.

Contact a professional organization to find out more about programs in your area that train DAD.

## *Qualities to Consider*

Here are some things you and your child might want to consider before getting a DAD.

- ❖ Would your child be comfortable with the extra attention he/she might receive by having a DAD?
- ❖ Would you feel more comfortable with an extra level of protection the DAD would provide?
- ❖ Would a DAD relieve any anxiety or depression your child may be experiencing?
- ❖ Would you allow space in your home, time, and money for a DAD?
- ❖ Would you attend ongoing assessment to train the DAD?
- ❖ Would your child be okay with bringing the dog everywhere, sports, sleepovers, etc. so the dog could help them?

## *Things to Consider (2)*

Not all people with diabetes may benefit from, or need, a DAD People who could benefit include:

- ❖ Those with hypoglycemia unawareness
- ❖ People who control their blood sugar using an insulin pump or injections
- ❖ Diabetics who experience low blood sugar levels frequently
- ❖ Children who require frequent blood sugar testing at night
- ❖ College students who are now living away from home and require additional support
- ❖ Anyone who would like additional help detecting their low sugar levels



## *Testimonials (3)*

Diabetics who have diabetic alert dogs are saying:

**"I now have a lower A1C score and better control of my diabetes."**

**"I have my independence back, living life to the fullest, with less fear of my blood sugar dropping too low and having a dangerous, scary or embarrassing episode"**

**"I have not needed Paramedics since being teamed with my Diabetic Alert Dog!"**