

type 1 diabetes:

THERE IS NO CURE

It's a lifelong (chronic) disease that requires 24 hour care and treatment. Children will not outgrow Type 1 Diabetes or their need for insulin. Every day, for the rest of their lives, children and adults with Type 1 will take insulin or they will die. It's that simple. It's that scary.

AN INSULIN PUMP ISN'T A CURE

An insulin pump is one of many medical devices used to treat Type 1 diabetes. A pump administers insulin, eliminating the need for multiple daily injections. A new cannula is inserted under the skin every 2-3 days, allowing insulin to be released at the touch of a button. But a pump cannot think. It is not a pancreas. The pump user is the human pancreas that must program the pump with insulin requirements, as well as count carbs and calculate the insulin-to-carb ratio (the amount of insulin that processes a certain number of carbs). The user also adjusts settings for illness, exercise, and situations that could raise or lower glucose levels. These settings change often and are carefully calculated, sometimes by using trial and error.

INSULIN OR DIE

Before the discovery of insulin in the early 1920's, children diagnosed with Type 1 Diabetes simply died. Some of the more fortunate were kept alive for a few months with a starvation treatment that restricted food for days at a time. A person with Type 1 diabetes must take insulin every day or they will die. No amount of healthy eating, exercise or carefully concocted herbal remedy will ever eliminate the need for insulin.

BEING A PANCREAS IS HARD WORK

Managing Type 1 involves more than taking shots and checking blood sugar. It is a complex balance of insulin dosage, exercise and carbs. Growth, illness, stress, changes in activity level, injection locations and many other factors can affect this balance. Continuous adjustment helps maintain healthy glucose levels. Managing Type 1 diabetes is a full time job. There are no paychecks, time off or vacation days, and overtime is required.

IT'S NOT AN OBESE DISEASE

Type 1 is an autoimmune disease. This means that a Type 1's own immune system destroys the insulin-producing cells of the pancreas. These antibodies did their "job," effectively destroying insulin production forever. No amount of exercise, healthy eating, seaweed, tea tree oil, or magic potion you read about last week will reverse the fact that without insulin, a person with Type 1 will die.

IT'S NOT CAUSED BY EATING TOO MUCH SUGAR

BABIES AND ADULTS GET IT TOO

Type 1 diabetes is most often diagnosed in children, adolescents and young adults.

IT'S AN AUTOIMMUNE DISEASE

Type 1 is an autoimmune disease, in which one's own immune system has destroyed the cells within the pancreas that make insulin. No one knows what triggers this immune system response and there is no cure for Type 1 Diabetes.

MY PANCREAS WILL NEVER MAKE INSULIN

Type 1 is an autoimmune disease, in which one's own immune system has destroyed the cells within the pancreas that make insulin. Taking insulin controls Type 1 diabetes and keeps a person alive.

IT HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH YOUR GRANDMA

Both Type 1 and Type 2 diabetes deal with blood glucose levels, but these are two different diseases. Please don't compare a person with Type 1 to a family member that has Type 2 diabetes. A child will not outgrow Type 1 Diabetes. Type 1 is not reversible and exercise and healthy eating will not cure it. No matter your intentions, sharing horror stories of your Type 2 relative just isn't helpful.

5-12 FINGER POKES EVERY DAY

A person with Type 1 must check blood glucose levels several times a day. At a minimum it should be tested upon rising, before all meals, and before bed. During sick days, exercise, and extreme lows or highs, it is common for a person with Type 1 to test glucose levels up to 12-15 times per day.

EXERCISE WON'T MAKE IT GO AWAY

Exercise will help control blood glucose levels and can even be the cause of low blood sugar. But it can never make Type 1 go away.

WE CAN HAVE OUR CAKE AND EAT IT TOO

Get ready because this is crazy stuff. People with Type 1 can eat cookies, candy, cupcakes and even that Dum Dum sucker from the bank! [GASPI] Type 1 diabetes is not caused by an overload of carbs, unhealthy eating or weight gain. Type 1's are basically healthy people with an overactive immune system. All organs (with the exception of the pancreas) are healthy and fully functional, just like yours. From time to time, all healthy kids and grownups should indulge in their favorite treat. People with Type 1 count the carbohydrates in their dessert and then dose the right amount of insulin to process those carbs. Voila! Just like that, they're eating like the rest of you.

NO ONE MADE YOU THE FOOD POLICE

People with Type 1 count the carbohydrates in their snack and then dose the right amount of insulin to process those carbs. And when people with Type 1 do eat, no one is allowed to ask, "Should you be eating that?"

THERE'S NO SUCH THING AS "UNDER CONTROL"

No matter how hard they try as children, or how hard they work as an adult, the blood glucose levels of a person with Type 1 will not "stabilize." Life with Type 1 means daily highs, lows, constant monitoring, insulin dosing, carb counting, and adjusting.

THERE'S NO PREVENTION

Nothing the person (or parent) did or did not do could have prevented the onset. No amount of healthy eating or exercise can stop the unknown trigger that causes the body to mistakenly attack and destroy the insulin producing cells within the pancreas.

I GET HIGH EVERY DAY

During digestion, food is converted into simpler forms, one of which is glucose. Insulin lowers blood sugar by allowing it to leave the bloodstream and enter cells, enabling the body to use glucose for energy. Too much insulin causes an abnormally low level of blood sugar, a body's main energy source. Rapid acting sugar will treat low blood sugar. Too many carbs or dosing too little insulin results in high blood glucose levels. There is no immediate danger in a temporarily high glucose reading. Drinking fluids and administering insulin will typically lower glucose levels within 1-2 hours.

20 IS ALL IT TAKES TO GET AN AMBULANCE

Low blood sugar is the immediate, and potentially fatal, danger of Type 1. Blood glucose levels around 20 can cause a person to become unresponsive and 911 should be called immediately. All glucose levels below 70 must be taken seriously and immediately treated with fast acting sugar.