

Life



with diabetes

Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation International

March 2009

Topics in Living with Type 1 Diabetes

The Importance of Raising Awareness About the Disease

Despite the fact that as many as three million Americans now have type 1 diabetes, including some celebrities, there is still a great deal of ignorance and confusion among the general public about the disease and how it differs from type 2.


Type 1 and type 2 diabetes are very different diseases that require very different treatments and coping skills. Although misunderstandings about diabetes can be quite frustrating, it's important to realize that most people are not intentionally ignorant about the disease—so they need you to explain it to them in your own words so that they can better understand. You may be the only person they know who is willing to take the time to do that for them. And you don't have to wait until National Diabetes Awareness Month in November to start—there are opportunities to educate others about type 1 diabetes all around you every day.

JDRF, although focused on finding a cure for diabetes, is also working right alongside you in the awareness spreading business and has a number of resources and activities to help you to get the facts out about type 1 diabetes.

For example, we have just launched a new [educational resource center on Juvenation](#), our social network for people with type 1 diabetes, where you can find handy cheat sheets for your friends, family, or co-workers, like “Diabetes Simplified” “Top 10 Annoying Things People Say About Diabetes” and “What I Wish My Friends Knew.” The best thing about these resources is that they are tech-friendly, so you can post them on your Facebook page or e-mail them to your friends in seconds!

[Read more...](#)

Contest



Diabetes Mine
2009 DESIGN CHALLENGE

SHARE YOUR INNOVATION FOR LIVING A BETTER LIFE WITH DIABETES >>>

Why Are iPods Cooler Than Glucose Monitors?

That's the \$10,000 question. Diabetes blogger and advocate Amy Tenderich is hosting an online competition to encourage creative new tools for improving life with diabetes. [Click here for details!](#)

Juvenation is now the largest social network for people with type 1 diabetes, with 3,000+ active members!



Help us get to 5K by May!
Go to www.juvenation.org and sign up today.

Ask a Parent

Insulin Pumps and Small Children

Q: Is five years old too young for an insulin pump? What are the advantages and disadvantages?

[Read more...](#)

Ask a Peer

Interviewing for a New Job

Q: I recently got laid off and am looking for a new job. Any ideas about handling the “What’s that on your belt” [insulin pump] question at interview time? I know asking about medical conditions is against the law, but want to be prepared to answer any questions and to calm any fears a potential employer might have.

[Read more...](#)

Ask a Parent

Insulin Pumps and Small Children

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A: We get this question all the time at JDRF's Online Diabetes Support Team. I want to start by telling you I can't offer any medical or legal advice. I can only offer advice from my experience with living with diabetes as a parent of a child with diabetes (son Alex, age seven, diagnosed at the age of two).

I understand where your questions regarding the insulin pump are coming from. Our son was five when he started on the pump. The hardest part was finding a good doctor that would be willing to put him on one. (Our local clinic would not do it until Alex was at least 12.) Then you have to deal with insurance. Our doctor wrote our insurance company a letter and explained to them why we needed it and, luckily, they covered it. You may have to appeal if coverage is denied.

The advantages that we have found with the pump are: fewer shots—you only change the injection site every three days; better blood sugar control by far—with shots you normally only correct the blood sugar at meal times, but on the pump when you check blood sugars in the middle of the night or afternoon, it is easy to make the correction immediately. Also, if your son will be very active for a while, you can easily stop the insulin without worrying.

There are some disadvantages, too. For example, when you leave the house for any amount of time you need to take batteries for the pump and the supplies to change the injection site. We have had to change sites at birthday parties, when we're out to eat, swimming, etc. Basically you always have to be prepared. If the blood sugar gets really high, the pump has a hard time bringing it down, so that is the only time that we use shots anymore. At first, the pump is something your son may have to get used to wearing all day and all night, every day. Alex had the most difficulty adjusting to wearing the pump at night, but it did not take long.

Alex really likes having the pump, but still goes through days where he hates having diabetes, which of course is understandable. You might want to reach out to someone from your local JDRF chapter. They may have activities or opportunities to meet other families with children your son's age. It might help your son realize

that he is not alone and that there are others who have to check their blood glucose levels and take insulin.

If you have more questions about the pump or diabetes please feel free to e-mail the [Online Diabetes Support Team](#). We would love to help!

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Another exciting way to raise awareness is through our [Tell Your Story](#) campaign, which is part of this year's JDRF Children's Congress. Even if you are not a delegate, kids and teens under 18 can participate by posting their story, video, and/or picture to our website. We want to hear from you!

School is another great—and necessary—place to raise awareness, either as a student or parent. JDRF's [School Advisory Toolkit](#) is a terrific resource for helping you educate teachers and other school personnel about the ins and outs of daily life with type 1 diabetes. The Toolkit also helps you with important things like setting up a 504 plan, and there's even a section for college students. Later this year, JDRF will release a full toolkit for college, as well as one for newly diagnosed adults with type 1 diabetes.

The JDRF website has articles on various aspects of life with diabetes, as well as [Fact Sheets](#) for you to download, print, and share as you deem appropriate. These are full of statistics and important messages about the impact of diabetes in the U.S. and worldwide.

The bottom line is that raising awareness about type 1 diabetes helps people who live with the disease to receive the respect, accommodations, and care they need, and also helps JDRF raise more money to fund research to find a cure.

Ask a Peer

Interviewing for a New Job

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A. Thank you for your inquiry. Your question is one with which I have personally been faced. I am sure I can help you feel more comfortable AND confident about finding a new job and not even be concerned about your pump!

But before I go on, let me tell you that my advice is not of a medical or legal nature. I am a volunteer for the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation (JDRF). I will, however, try to give you some sound advice/ideas.

I also have type 1 diabetes and have lived with it for a long time—it'll be 43 years this November. My insulin pump therapy didn't begin until I had already been living with diabetes for 30 years. There hadn't been too many employers that had any problems with either my having diabetes or my pump until my last job. They seemed to have a problem with EVERYTHING. What I have learned from that experience was to educate people as much as possible so that they can handle any emergency that might come up. Anything other than that is really out of your hands.

You are absolutely correct about the question of an interviewer asking about your pump being against the law. My first reaction to that is if it should take place, very politely tell them what it is and that it would have no bearing on your ability to do the job. I would personally tell them that it is my "computerized pancreas" because it would definitely get an unusual reaction from them, but when you're looking for a new job, being a little sarcastic might not be in your best interest! Honestly, what I suggest you do is make sure your pump isn't visible. If it's on your belt, that's fine, but wear a jacket or something like a longer blouse or sweater that comes over it so it isn't so noticeable. What they can't see, they can't ask about! I do recommend that you keep any employer informed about your diabetes when you secure a new position. I am a firm believer that it is not only for your benefit, but it also gives peace of mind to your employer. This isn't something that has to be discussed during an interview, but it might be a good topic to discuss when you are starting your first day.

I would also like to encourage you to connect with other diabetes families in your area. I've met some of the most amazing families over the years that are able to offer new perspectives on daily life with diabetes. They have become some of my dearest friends. Your local JDRF chapter might be the place to meet other people managing their diabetes by insulin pump, who have had similar issues. I wish you the absolute best. Keep in touch!

For more information about type 1 diabetes in the workplace, [click here](#).

If you have a question for JDRF's Online Diabetes Support Team, go to www.jdrf.org/diabetessupport.