

A New Approach to Treating Juvenile Diabetes

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(Liz Bonis) -- A new trial supported by the juvenile diabetes research foundation could vastly improve the quality of life for children who have diabetes and their families.

Delaney Grace is seven years old and has juvenile diabetes. To balance her blood sugars she must check her blood sugar levels frequently and wear a pump which infuses the hormone insulin into her body.

Her mother, Donna Walker, said, "We check her blood sugar anywhere from 10 to 12 times a day, and it's a constant finger prick. During the night while she's asleep, I get up twice a night to check her blood sugars and at that time I usually prick her toes."

But one day soon, those blood sugar checks could be a thing of the past, thanks to researchers like Maxx Somers who's conducting what's called "The Family Project," which looks at a way to look at kids blood sugars and how they rise and fall throughout the day.

As part of the trial, Delaney's insulin pump is hooked up to a continuous glucose monitor. It takes 488 readings a day and it produces a graph that shows researchers how her glucose levels rise and fall.

The researchers are trying to find out what's happening between the times when blood sugar levels are checked. They say finding this out could make a big difference in a child's quality of life.

The hope is that eventually Delaney's pump could be programmed to deliver insulin based on these continuous readings.

Marie Uhlenbrock of the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation said, "So they are able to treat the whole day and the whole person and not just what's happening at that moment."

Results of this trial are expected some time next year.