



Kerri's Korner

The Secret Language of Diabetes



JDRF is very happy to announce the introduction of a new column in *Life with Diabetes: Kerri's Korner*. Kerri Sparling writes daily at her diabetes blog, www.sixuntilme.com, and is an editor at dLife.com. She is recently married and lives in Connecticut with her husband, Chris, and their army of cats.

We know we have a special language—it's been confirmed in several editions of the diabetes terms of endearment—and almost all of us in this diabetes community recognize the different terms.

But sometimes, those terms drop from the mouths of our friends, and the sound always amazes me.

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Ask a Peer

Pump Infusion Sites

Q: I've been using pump therapy for the past 10 years. I often experience pain and irritation from the infusion site during sleep, getting in/out of the car, sitting at my desk, doing the smallest tasks. I feel like I'm running out of places to insert the infusion set. Is there a "map" to show the recommended sites on the body?

A: A JDRF Online Diabetes Support Team member answers: I cannot offer you medical advice, but I have type 1 diabetes and have been on the pump for 12 years. Your question about infusion sites is a tricky one, and one I am actually dealing with right now. I don't have a lot of body fat, and finding a good site is sometimes tough. I recently talked to my doctor about this, since he was concerned that I was having fat and scar-tissue buildup around my abdomen from re-using the same sites.

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Ask a Parent

Child with Type 1 Starting Daycare

Q: My son is three and will be starting daycare in June. I have done an informational meeting (recognizing signs of high/low blood sugar, taking a finger stick, administering insulin, glucagon, etc.) but the daycare staff is asking for guidelines on how to care for him. I don't need a formal 504, but is there anything out there that I can use as a guide?

A: Thank you for contacting us. My son is four years old and was diagnosed with type 1 diabetes when he was 17 months old. I am sorry to hear about your son's diagnosis with diabetes. It is an adjustment time for all families, including your own. I found that contacting JDRF helped me through my journey and I hope it helps you through yours.

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Kerri's Korner

The Secret Language of Diabetes

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Like yesterday morning, I was having a marathon phone conversation with one of my best friends, and she mentioned that she told one of her co-workers about me having diabetes. "I was like, yeah, Kerri is a type 1 and she wears an insulin pump..." and she kept talking, but the phrase "a type 1" stuck in my head. She and I don't talk about diabetes much, but she's one of my closest friends and this language has become part of her vernacular almost by osmosis.

It's my disease to manage, but my closest friends and family members are so tuned in to it that they don't even notice anymore. Needles in my purse are par for the course. Looking at me and casually mentioning, "Ker, your wire is out," happens all the time. "Whoa, that'll empty out a pump," after seeing a huge dessert delivered to a table. Smooshed granola bars and stashes of juice boxes have found their way into everyone's glove compartments, and I'm not even sure they realize it. Numbers like 98 and 112 become amusing—"Hey, that's like a perfect blood sugar!"

"Oh my gosh, that looks delicious. You think it's like 40 grams of carbs?"

"Dude, let's go in the water. Throw your pump in the cooler!"

"We've got everything we need for the hike: water bottle, glucose tabs, and sunscreen."

They "get it," but the best part is that they don't realize how much they've "gotten it." Their level of understanding is so intrinsic and instinctive that they barely notice.

I rely on these people so much. My meter gives me blood sugar results and my pump delivers life-sustaining insulin, but my emotional health is nurtured and cared for by my outstanding support team. It blows my mind to think about how many people are really needed to keep me healthy. My endocrinologist and my primary care physician monitor my physiological progress and keep me steeped in information. My ob/gyn keeps tabs on my reproductive system and helps me prepare my body for baby. My retinologist watches out for those pesky eye issues.

But there's so much more than just the doctors. There's my mom and dad reminding me that regardless of how old I become,

I'm still their daughter and still their worry. My brother and sister, who know how to support without smothering. My close friends, who make sure my life is as free as theirs, but just in case, they keep juice at the ready. And my husband, who loves me in sickness and in health, not letting diabetes define our relationship—or us.

"Oh, the food's here. Time to shoot up." That's a phrase only a person who knows the secret language of diabetes would understand.

Ask a Peer

Pump Infusion Sites

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In general, the abdomen is the best place, both for absorption and because there tends to be a little bit of fat there. The trick is moving it around. If the right side of your belly interferes with your seat belt, try higher up, or perhaps closer to your belly button. Basically, anywhere in your midsection that has a little bit of fat is okay. And if you can mix it up every time you change sites, all the better. The back is also a good area, as are the thighs and the backs of your arms, though I don't use these because of the type of exercise I usually do.

I don't know of a map of handy sites for inserting the pump, but I would play around with different sites and see what works for you. I was hesitant at first when my doctor told me to experiment, because honestly I have very little fat and didn't want to feel the pain of the needle directly into muscle or skin. So far though, with all the experimenting I have done, there was only one site that was too painful and had to be re-inserted. Try thinking outside the box with this one. Just be sure to check your BGs with a new infusion site. Your absorption may increase or decrease a bit, and you should be vigilant of changes.

You may also find it helpful to talk to other people with diabetes in your area. If you're interested, I can contact your local JDRF, and they'll let you know about local support groups. JDRF also has an online community where you can post questions of this sort. Check out <http://www.juvenation.org>.

Hope this helps. Good luck with it and let me know if you have other questions.

Ask a Parent

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Finding the right daycare can be a rough road even when your child does not have diabetes. I think it is wonderful that you found one that you are comfortable with and that is so interested in taking good care of your son. When my son was first diagnosed, I had to find a new daycare for him and that was hard. He is now in a terrific daycare, but they do not give him insulin. I still have to do that.

Most daycare facilities will require a written document on how to care for your child. I truly didn't know what I was doing, so I just did what I thought was best at the time. I wrote down everything I did with him for three days and then condensed it. I put down when he was tested, how many units of insulin I gave, what snacks he likes to eat, and which ones increase his blood sugar if he is low, etc. I have modified it over the past three years to accommodate his changing body, but this seemed to satisfy the daycare staff.

You may also be asked to fill out daily diabetes log sheets, which consist of details such as whether or not your child has eaten that morning, whether he's received insulin and the dose, and whether his blood sugar was normal, high, or low that morning.

Other moms are another great source of help for school and daycare issues. To connect with other moms in your area, I would recommend becoming a member of your local chapter of the JDRF. I have learned many tips and tricks for managing diabetes this way. JDRF also has a School Advisory Toolkit, which has a section on daycare. You can request the toolkit online [here](#).

Online support is terrific, too. Juvenation (www.juvenation.org) is a social network recently created by JDRF. I have asked many questions on this site and have received terrific opinions from other moms of toddlers with type 1, and from people with type 1 diabetes themselves!

Finally, you may want to talk to your son's endocrinologist. He/she may have forms to help you get started. These forms may be too textbook (each child is different with management of their diabetes), but they can be great starting tools.

I hope that I have been helpful for you. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me anytime!

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