



## Kerri's Korner

"I thought you couldn't eat that."



*Kerri Sparling is a writer from New England who has been living with type 1 diabetes for 23 years. Kerri writes daily at her diabetes blog, [www.sixuntilme.com](http://www.sixuntilme.com), and currently runs a full-time healthcare consulting business. She and her husband are expecting their first child in the spring.*

"I thought you couldn't eat that. Or can you just dose for it and then it's okay?"

She wasn't being the dreaded "diabetes police;" she was just asking a question.

I can understand my aunt-in-law's confusion about how my type 1 diabetes is handled. To some of my husband's relatives, type 2 diabetes is far more familiar than type 1. Wasn't I supposed to just avoid sugar?

"I can eat this," I explained, motioning toward the slice of cheesecake on my plate, "so long as I check my blood sugar beforehand, take the right amount of insulin from my insulin pump, and avoid a high blood sugar spike afterwards."

[Read more...](#)

## Ask a Parent

**Q:** My daughter has type 1 diabetes and seems to have come down with a stomach flu. She has been throwing up a lot, so the doctor told us to keep her hydrated, but nothing she drinks is staying down. Any suggestions from someone who has dealt with this type of situation?

**A:** I am the parent of a child with type 1 diabetes as well. My suggestions are not intended as medical advice – just ideas based on my own experience with the stomach flu and diabetes!

[Read more...](#)

## JDRF Launches Adult Type 1 "Toolkit"



*As part of its expanding commitment to improving the lives of adults who have type 1 diabetes, JDRF has created a new resource called the JDRF Adult Type 1 Toolkit.*

Written by people who have type 1 diabetes, the Toolkit is an essential "how-to" guidebook about living with the disease. It offers information and advice on a plethora of topics, such as how to deal with the diagnosis and day-to-day management of diabetes, how to tell friends about the disease, and how to juggle the demands of diabetes at work. It describes how diabetes affects physical and psychological health, relationships, and parenting. It gives tips for approaching things like diet, exercise, travel, and work and explains how to educate others about type 1, especially on what to do in emergency situations.

JDRF hopes the Toolkit can also help to foster a sense of community among type 1 adults, who represent the majority of those living with the disease. Toward that goal, it outlines ways to connect with a network of other type 1 adults and with JDRF's "expert listeners," volunteers who give advice and tips for dealing with specific situations that people with diabetes encounter.

JDRF developed the Toolkit to address the glaring lack of resources for adults with type 1 diabetes. When children are diagnosed, their parents are often flooded with support and resources to help them care for their child and cope with the disease's impact on the entire family. Yet when adults are diagnosed, they usually have far fewer resources and often don't know where to turn for support. The resources for children are

[Read more...](#)

## Ask a Parent

*continued from page 1*

As your doctor probably told you, vomiting can be dangerous to a child with diabetes. When your daughter is sick and vomiting, you should have medicine on hand from your physician to stop the vomiting. Be sure that her blood sugar is not too high and that she doesn't have ketones, as that will make her nauseous as well. If she does have ketones, you will likely need more insulin, and your doctor should be able to tell you how much she would need. Since kids can also get really low blood sugar in these situations, make sure you have something sugary handy, in dose-appropriate amounts.

Also, she should try eating ice chips instead of water, because too much water can make her continue to vomit. I would also recommend Gatorade ice chips to keep her hydrated; to make these, you just freeze some Gatorade in ice trays.

Hang in there. Most parents feel overwhelmed and concerned when their kids are really sick, and for parents of kids who have type 1 diabetes, those feelings are always heightened. You're doing the right thing by contacting your physician and connecting to the JDRF community!

## Ask a Peer

**Q:** I'm an 18-year-old with diabetes (diagnosed when I was 11), and I'm finding it really hard to cope. I don't take my medicine or care for myself like I should. I know the long-term effects and what can happen to me if I don't start doing what I should, but I need some other kind of help getting motivated, and I don't know where to begin. Any suggestions?

**A:** First off, thank you for reaching out to JDRF. I know it's not always easy to talk about what's going on or to ask the questions you need answered.

I, too, am diabetic, and I was also diagnosed at the age of 11. I remember how much I hated having diabetes, because it meant that I was different than all the other kids in my class, with no one who could relate to what I was experiencing.

Don't be too hard on yourself about the lack of motivation. It's pretty common. For many people, the threat of the physical consequences alone is not enough.

I would suggest joining a local support group. This helped me because I got to meet other people with diabetes in my area. You can even do this online with social networking sites like Juvenation ([www.juvenation.org](http://www.juvenation.org)). You can also look into volunteering to work with people who are newly diagnosed with diabetes. This is the best "medicine," because it feels great to know that you are helping someone else.

Finally, I also strongly recommend talking to your doctor about how you control your disease. Technology like continuous glucose monitors (CGMs) or insulin pumps can help in managing diabetes, even at those times when we feel unmotivated. I just got a pump, and I love it because it has drastically improved my quality of life! It's a little device that you wear 24/7 (don't worry, it can be easily hidden) and that gives you insulin through a clear tube that you change out every three days. It doesn't hurt – in fact, I hardly feel mine. You can enter your blood sugar readings and the amount of carbs you're eating, and it calculates the amount of insulin you should tell the device to give you at that time.

Don't get discouraged – you've already taken a step in the right direction by connecting with JDRF!

## Ask About the Flu

**Q:** Flu season is in full swing, the news is buzzing about H1N1, and I'm getting worried that my hectic schedule and type 1 diabetes are putting my immune system at even greater risk. As someone with type 1 diabetes, do I face more serious implications if I get sick or stressed?

**A:** It's important to know that diabetes, illness, and stress can affect each other in several ways. First, just being sick or stressed can raise blood glucose, and even prevent you from eating the right daily diet. Diabetes can also weaken the immune system, making those with the disease more likely to contract and respond severely to the flu. These are just a few reasons why it is imperative that everyone with diabetes, including pregnant women, get a yearly flu vaccination. The U.S. Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has even created the [CDC Diabetes and Flu/Pneumococcal Campaign](#), urging anyone and everyone with diabetes to get vaccinated. Remember, there are many resources and solutions out there, so panicking is as unnecessary as it is unproductive.

## JDRF Launches Adult Type 1 “Toolkit”

*continued from page 1*

often not applicable to adults, who have different needs. Making matters more difficult, adult type 1 diabetes is frequently subject to misinformation and misconceptions that blur the lines between type 1 and type 2, leaving people with the disease feeling isolated and sometimes confused. The Toolkit is one aspect of JDRF’s response to these issues.

JDRF recognizes that as people grow older, their interests, priorities, and needs change. The Toolkit aims to address, identify, and support these evolving concerns. It provides the adult type 1 diabetes community with specific content and tools focused on various life stages, such as the point of diagnosis, relationships and marriage, pregnancy and children, the workplace, and complications. In this way, it underscores JDRF’s determination to help people with diabetes remain as healthy as possible as we work toward finding a cure.

The Adult Type 1 Toolkit is an early step in JDRF’s plans to develop an extensive program to support the needs of adults who have type 1 diabetes. We will be developing additional resources to ensure that adults have the support they need to live well with the disease.

The Toolkit is free and available at any of JDRF’s 85 chapters nationwide or at [www.jdrf.org/adults](http://www.jdrf.org/adults).

## Kerri’s Korner

### “I thought you couldn’t eat that.”

*continued from page 1*

“So you can eat anything you want with that insulin pump?” she asked.

The thing is, I think insulin does make it seem like I can eat anything I want. While I indulged in that piece of cheesecake after dinner, it was a risk I took. It meant I had to take more insulin, and I’ve read all these obtuse reports about how taking more insulin can be tougher on our bodies. (Is that true – does insulin actually AGE us? I’m still wondering about that one.) I risked the immediate spike, as well as the latent spike in my blood sugar after eating the cake. I wanted to indulge, and I weighed the risk of this indulgence. It’s a split-second decision that my brain

is programmed to make by this point. Diabetes is all about coloring in the lines, i.e. keeping blood sugars well-controlled to minimize impact on the body.

Having had type 1 diabetes since I was a kid, I’ve always taken insulin. Always. I don’t know anything about type 2 oral medications, and I have no concept of managing diabetes solely through diet and exercise. It’s either been multiple injections or the insulin pump.

Insulin is cool stuff. It keeps me steady and solid on days when I’m following “the rules,” and for things like holidays (where there is a whole dessert table and all kinds of sugary treats), I do have the option to up the bolus ante. But is it a cure? Nope. And using insulin requires a lot of work.

But I wonder what people think sometimes when they watch me eat. How does it look from their eyes? They know I have diabetes, and from their less-familiar vantage point, they view it as “serious” because I take insulin. I use sugar substitutes in my coffee, and I never drink the eggnog or have regular soda. I almost always avoid the mashed potatoes and sweet potato casserole, and at family gatherings, there is usually a “sugar-free” dessert. They hear me talk about carb counting and blood sugar control, and they know I work in diabetes advocacy. They understand as much as they can, not actually living with the disease themselves.

But what do they think when I reach for a piece of cheesecake? Do they think I’m “off the wagon?” Do they think I’m being irresponsible because I’m eating a sweet? Responsible because I’m testing and shooting accordingly? Does it confuse them to see me clamor for a glass of grape juice when my blood sugar is low? Do they wonder why every time they see me, there appear to be new “rules” for managing my type 1 diabetes?

Diabetes is a constantly shifting platform on which we’re trying to balance. Every day is different, every person with diabetes is different, and the rules do seem to change every day. One day, I can eat cheesecake and not spike. But some evenings, a cup of tea tosses me towards 200 mg/dl.

“A pump isn’t a cure, though, right? I mean, you still have to prick your finger and tell the pump what to do, don’t you?”

She’s learning, petal by petal. And despite all these years, so am I.

## JDRF Volunteer Honored

We congratulate JDRF National Outreach volunteer Lisa Shenson on being honored with the Martin Luther King Humanitarian Award by California's Marin County Commission on Human Rights.

Lisa is being recognized for her advocacy work on behalf of children with diabetes. She provides direct assistance and support to families with legal issues surrounding diabetes care at school.

Lisa is a longstanding moderator for JDRF's [Online Diabetes Support Team](#), a group of dedicated JDRF volunteers who help people with type 1 diabetes and their families by answering their questions about living with the disease. While the Online Diabetes Support Team cannot give medical advice, they do provide personalized support and expertise on a variety of topics. The ODST has answered nearly 20,000 requests for support and information to date.

Lisa has also been instrumental in the success of JDRF's [School Advisory Toolkit](#), a publication that provides practical information and advice to help families and schools work together to create a safe, caring, and positive learning environment for children with type 1 diabetes. Three years ago, Lisa wrote an executive summary for JDRF that led directly to the development of the School Advisory Toolkit and the School Advisory Team.

"I am deeply humbled and honored by the Commission's recognition of my advocacy work on behalf of children with diabetes," Lisa says. "As one might well imagine, this work has deep personal meaning...and it is truly one of the most rewarding forms of volunteerism I've had the honor to perform. This award serves as affirmation that protecting the rights of all children with diabetes is worthy of the public's attention: appropriate diabetes care at school is a basic human and civil right that touches the life of every child living with diabetes."

If you have a question for JDRF's Online Diabetes Support Team, go to [www.jdrf.org/diabetessupport](http://www.jdrf.org/diabetessupport).

## Ask About the Flu

*continued from page 2*

Since you have type 1 diabetes, you must be proactive about staying healthy, especially during flu season. To help you do that, we've provided some flu-related information and resources below that you and others with diabetes should know about and consider.

If you do get sick, you should contact your doctor, stay home from school or work, and be even more careful than usual about hand sanitizing, especially when testing your blood glucose. You can learn more about these topics at the [CDC H1N1 Flu Information for People with Diabetes](#) page.

As someone with type 1 diabetes, you are also more susceptible to complications, such as pneumonia, if you get the flu. For a breakdown of vulnerable groups, flu shot locations and other data from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, visit [Flu.gov](#). For flu information on specific groups, see the [CDC Seasonal Flu Information](#) page, or call their toll-free, 24-hour line: 1-800-CDC-INFO.

Since H1N1 evolves constantly, information surrounding it does, too. To stay up-to-date on details about H1N1 and track its spread, visit the [CDC H1N1 Flu Resource](#) page.

Though H1N1 is a current "hot topic," there are many types of the influenza virus. For a scientific understanding of the different flu varieties and other flu information, read this [National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases](#) page.

Please keep in mind that this information should not replace a doctor's advice. If you have specific flu questions or symptoms, you should contact your doctor immediately.

## Did You Know?

You can ask additional questions or connect with your local chapter by contacting JDRF's Outreach group at [outreach@jdrf.org](mailto:outreach@jdrf.org).