

TOPICS IN TYPE 1 DIABETES

What is Health 2.0 and How Can It Help Me Live Better With Diabetes?

Although it's still being defined, the recent phenomenon known as Health 2.0 is perhaps best described as "patient-empowered health care." In the 21st century, people with diabetes (or virtually any other health condition) can find valuable resources, including social networks, online to help them cope and make better informed decisions about their care. Medical questions and advice should always be directed toward a doctor or other medical professional; however, given the increasingly demanding schedules of doctors today, simple emotional and social support is often best sought from peers who "know the ropes," have lived with a disease for a number of years, and have been through similar situations. Over the past several months, a plethora of new online resources have been established to help people with diabetes live better with the disease, and many are specific to type 1 diabetes.

[CLICK HERE TO READ MORE.](#)

WHAT'S NEW ON THE JDRF WEBSITE?

U.S. Congress Renews Special Diabetes Research Funding Initiative

In December, the U.S. House and Senate passed a Medicare bill that included a one-year extension of the Special Diabetes Program. The bill allocates \$150 million in funding toward a cure for type 1 diabetes. JDRF advocates helped play a major role in ensuring the renewal of the Special Diabetes Program, which began in 1997 and has been renewed 3 times. JDRF President & CEO Arnold Donald said the passage of the bill ensures that federal funding for type 1 diabetes research will avoid a major cut and "is a critical first step towards the goal of a multi-year renewal. We look forward to working with Congress next year to make a multi-year renewal a reality."

[Read the full press release.](#)

ASK A PARENT

Help from JDRF's Online Diabetes Support Team

Q: My teen daughter was recently diagnosed with type 1 and I would like to know how long the "honeymoon" phase lasts, and how we will know when it has ended?

A: The honeymoon phase is the time period when a newly diagnosed diabetic's pancreas is still producing a bit of insulin. The average honeymoon period lasts anywhere from 1 to 6 months, but everyone is different.

[CLICK HERE TO READ MORE.](#)

ASK A TEEN

Help from JDRF's Online Diabetes Support Team

Q: I am newly diagnosed with type 1 diabetes and I hear stories about kids making a difference with their diabetes and how they have such a positive look on life with diabetes. I don't understand how they can be so happy when they put themselves through pain and suffering every day just to stay alive. I am really confused on how I should feel. What do you think I should do?

A: I think I understand why you asked the question on having a positive outlook when living with diabetes, especially given the fact that you were just recently diagnosed. That's a difficult question to tackle, but I am going to try and answer it and help you make some sense of your feelings.

[CLICK HERE TO READ MORE.](#)

WHAT A JDRF CHAPTER CAN DO FOR YOU

Diabetes in School

Working with school staff is essential for parents of children with type 1 diabetes. When school personnel is responsive and understanding, it does wonders for a family's peace of mind. Unfortunately, there are times when school challenges arise and it becomes necessary for parents to communicate with school staff in order to develop solutions to these challenges. Regardless of the circumstances in your school, JDRF has developed new resources to better serve and empower families as they communicate with school staff. For more information, contact your [local chapter](#) and ask about the School Advisory Toolkit for Families.

You can let us know what you think of *life with diabetes* or subscribe today by sending an e-mail to info@jdrf.org. In your subscription request, please include **SUBSCRIBE LIFE WITH DIABETES** in the subject line.

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Social Networks Provide Immeasurable Psychological Benefits

Social networks like MySpace and Facebook have been used for several years as meeting places for teens and college students, but in recent years have evolved into much more. Last year, a new website called Ning was founded to give people the opportunity to create their own social networks. One of these networks is [TuDiabetes](#), which was created by Manny Hernandez in March 2007, and currently has more than 1,600 members. TuDiabetes features a forum, which includes areas for newly diagnosed people, adults with type 1, parents, and people on insulin pumps; groups to bring people together who share common interests, like geographic area, religious beliefs, and occupations; and personal profiles of its members which allows them to create a blog and upload photos and videos.

[DiabetesTalkfest](#) is another site hosted on the Ning network. It also features a forum and personal profiles, and it also offers special chats with some of the most popular names in the diabetes community, including Miss America 1999 Nicole Johnson, psychologist William Polonsky, Gary Scheiner, C.D.E., and diabetes author Amy Tenderich.

[Facebook](#), one of the leading social networks on the Internet, has several groups for people with diabetes. There are actually more than 500 groups about diabetes on Facebook, the largest being “Find a Cure for Diabetes,” which has over 7,500 members.

Chris Bishop, 34, who has had type 1 diabetes for twenty years, says such resources have been invaluable to him: “Before I began exploring the internet for diabetes-related sites and information, I did not manage my diabetes very well. Many of the blogs and online communities helped to open my eyes to my health and how to better manage it.”

Forums and Blogs

Forums, also called message boards, are very popular places for people to ask questions about living with diabetes. Two of the most popular are [DiabetesDaily](#) and [Diabetesforums](#).

Blogs (short for “weblogs”) are online journals and there are over two hundred written by people affected with diabetes. An entire list of blogs can be found at the [Diabetes O.C. Website](#) and you can look up blogs by type of diabetes, treatment, location, gender, and age. Like a journal, a blog gives the author the ability to write personal first-person accounts of living with diabetes, but allows readers to leave comments. The conversation is guided by the author, but gives readers the opportunity to give suggestions and words of wisdom, which is especially comforting for people going through difficult times with diabetes.

Technological Tools

In addition to places to meet people, there are also practical and educational tools available online to help with diabetes management. One such tool offers a new service for tracking and recording blood sugars called [Sugar Stats](#). The free service provides log sheets and graphs to enter in and analyze blood sugars, and the advanced service (\$10 a month) allows you to track fitness and doctor’s visits and A1C levels.

[Glucoboy](#) is another exciting technological advance, designed especially for kids with type 1 diabetes. Users note that the Glucoboy blood glucose meter is extremely accurate and requires only a 0.6 µl blood sample. The meter can also be used with the Nintendo Game Boy® Advance System or the GRiP incentive-based web community to reward a child for good management and frequent testing.

There are many websites and forums geared towards general chronic illness topics, but this is a glimpse into the world of health 2.0 resources dedicated towards the unique challenges of people with diabetes. JDRF recommends people with diabetes always consult their doctor or diabetes educator before making any changes to their diabetes regimen, and that information obtained online be a basis for deeper discussion with their diabetes care team.

(Editors note: JDRF has a presence on many social networks, including Facebook and MySpace).

ASK A PARENT

Help from JDRF’s Online Diabetes Support Team

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My daughter’s honeymoon phase was about 3 to 4 months, if I remember correctly. During that time insulin needs will likely fluctuate greatly, and there will be many adjustments to be made. It might seem kind of crazy for a while. We knew my daughter was out of her honeymoon phase because there weren’t really any significant changes in her insulin needs over a period of about a month, and it seemed as though her body responded well to the dosages prescribed. Keep in mind that hormones will play a part as well. And, given that your daughter is female, when she is on her period expect to see unusual blood sugar levels. They can be high for several days or you may even see several lows—unfortunately, it’s part of the program. Typically, my daughter runs high during her period, even now. Because it is temporary, we don’t worry about it too much. At this point in her life, she knows how to correct for those blood sugar changes.

Have a question? Go to the JDRF Online Diabetes Support Team at www.jdrf.org/diabetessupport.

ASK A TEEN

Help from JDRF's Online Diabetes Support Team

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It's hard to adjust to change, right? I will be honest—I am pretty stubborn, so if I do something one way it is hard for me to change and do it a new way. It takes time to adjust to anything that is new—no matter how small or large the change is. In this case, diabetes is a change that you will have to live with. It is going to be hard at first to constantly test your blood sugar levels, eat certain things, plus take insulin shots. Over time—and I speak from first-hand experience—it becomes a part of you. It is hard to see that when you are first diagnosed. I do not look at diabetes as a negative, but rather a positive, in shaping the person I have become.

Obviously, you aren't going to be happy about being diagnosed—you may ask 'why me?'—and that is only natural. I was young when I was diagnosed, so my parents had to do "most" of the work—testing my blood sugar levels, waking me for snacks in the middle of the night, and giving me my shots. It was more difficult for them when I was first diagnosed.

As I grew up, I started to take control, monitoring my blood sugar levels and giving myself my own shots when I was in the fifth grade. Back then I didn't understand why I had diabetes and none of my friends or family had it. But with time it "grows on you", meaning it becomes routine. I do not know if you play any sports or an instrument, but I am sure you have heard the different quotes around 'practice'. Without consistent practice you won't be as good as you can be. The more you practice the easier and more natural things will be. Just like sports or anything you are practicing—diabetes is the same. The more you get in the habit of pricking your finger for the blood sugar readings and giving your own shots, the easier it will be for you and the faster you will adjust.

You asked what I think you should do... I think you should continue to read the stories about the positive outlooks. You will be upset at first, but remember that everything will be ok if you take care of yourself. This will only make you stronger. Everything happens for a reason—I truly believe that. Keep a positive attitude as best as you can.

These two links have a ton of information for diabetes questions <http://www.jdrf.org> and <http://www.childrenwithdiabetes.com>. They may help with any other questions you have down the road. And please feel free to contact me again.

JDRF volunteer Sarah O'Donnell was diagnosed with type 1 diabetes 18 years ago at age 6.