Recently Diagnosed with Type 1 Diabetes? Learn About Your Treatment Options

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Type 1 Diabetes Treatment

The treatment of type 1 diabetes (T1D) is both obvious and not obvious. The obvious methods of treating T1D are taking insulin as needed and checking blood glucose (or sugar) levels. Doing these things are a great start to properly treating T1D, but they are just the tip of the iceberg.

On top of doing the standard required treatment for type 1 diabetes, adjusting your overall lifestyle will definitely have a huge impact on your treatment plan and quality of life! Some other adjustments that are extremely important to take into consideration when treating type 1 diabetes include: learning which insulin and insulin delivery method works best with your body, finding a diet plan that supports blood sugar balance and your lifestyle, and also looking into potentially getting continuous glucose monitor to further your care.

Finding the Right Method of Insulin Delivery

Every human who lives with type 1 diabetes has a right to manage it how they want. Choosing and experimenting with different types of insulin and insulin methods will play a huge role in getting the disease under control. There are two main ways to get insulin into the body: MDI (multiple daily injections) and insulin pumps. Figuring out which method works best for your lifestyle will have a great impact on your treatment of type 1 diabetes.

Some may love an insulin pump and not mind being attached to a medical device 24/7. Others may find that the trade-off of taking fewer insulin injections is not worth being attached to a pump and will opt for MDI. Being on MDI also creates the possibility of using different kinds of insulin, so this can be a deciding factor for many people. Learn more about insulin injections (insulin syringes and insulin pens).

Various long-acting insulins can work really well for certain bodies, and these can only be administered through MDI. Personally, I think it's a good idea to try both (if possible) before sticking with one for a long period of time; it’s nice to have a balanced and informed personal opinion.

Diet and Lifestyle

Making deliberate choices about your food and exercise on a daily basis can have a massively positive effect on your diabetes! It’s a great idea to experiment with lots of different foods to see how they affect your blood sugar and whether they are worth keeping in your everyday life. It’s a good idea to view food as fuel and recognize the power it has when it comes to managing type 1 diabetes.

Every human body processes food differently, even when it comes to metabolizing carbohydrates, therefore it is important to figure out what works for you and your body. There are many diet and exercise programs that promote a very specific way of eating, and to these, I say be wary. Often, joining a program that promotes a very

specific type of lifestyle can lead to an unhealthy relationship with food and possibly even disordered eating eventually. I suggest doing research, reading books, following blogs and through those discovering how best to nourish yourself. There are so many ways to enjoy the foods we love when living with T1D, while still maintaining good blood sugar management. It just takes a little extra thought and preparation!

Monitoring Blood Glucose (Blood Sugar) Levels

Making sure blood sugar levels are in proper range should be a top priority for someone living with type 1 diabetes. If blood sugar is elevated for a prolonged period of time, it can cause serious health problems later on in life. On the other hand, if low blood sugar is left untreated, it can cause severe reactions including seizures and sudden death.

If accessible to you, I would highly recommend getting a flash glucose monitor (FGM) or continuous glucose monitor (CGM), especially when first diagnosed. These devices allow you to see blood glucose trends in almost real time (5-minute delay), with arrows pointing in the direction your blood sugar is heading. This means it is easy to catch low or high blood sugar before it gets too severe, and proper treatment can be taken ahead of time.

Also, having one of these devices can help reveal how foods are really reacting in your body, and they can aid in finding foods that compliment your lifestyle. Another benefit is being able to see how long it takes for the effects of insulin to hit the bloodstream. This can be so helpful for food-timing and pre-blousing (administering insulin early to avoid big spikes in blood sugar).

Clearly, treating type 1 diabetes isn’t totally black and white. Every person living with the disease is on their own personal journey with how they manage it. It is a rapidly evolving journey since there are always better, newer technologies being made to help manage it. The best thing you can do to treat T1D is to take it day-by-day and always be open to learning.