

Summer 2009

Life with diabetes

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Samaritan campuses to go tobacco-free

Samaritan Health Services is dedicated to enhancing the health and well-being of the communities it serves. We are proud to join with health systems around the country to create a tobacco-free, healthy environment for our patients, employees, physicians and visitors. The tobacco-free status goes into effect on May 31, 2009 — World No-Tobacco Day — and applies to all Samaritan Health Services hospitals and campus buildings, physician clinics, parking lots (including inside of vehicles) and sidewalks that make up our campuses.

To learn more, call 1-800-863-5241.

Mark your calendar

2009 Diabetes Training Camp

A personal fitness and event training camp for those with diabetes.

Dates: Aug. 9 to 15

Location: University of Oregon

For more information, go to www.diabetestrainingcamp.com/camps.html

Type 1 diabetes, celiac sprue doesn't discourage local 23-year-old

When Ariela Brodsky was diagnosed at age 11 with type 1 diabetes, she actually thought her new disease was “cool.” She demonstrated to her friends how she'd check her blood sugars and found that adhering to a strict diet came easy to her.

The “cool” factor of diabetes quickly dissolved. But her positive, cheerful attitude remains after 12 years of medical challenges.

“In my case, my hormones have made managing diabetes very difficult,” says Brodsky. “When I got into my teenage years, things would just go crazy and there would be no explanation for why my blood sugars would spike. That inability to control things has been frustrating. But I have always believed it's best to be positive.”



Ariela Brodsky

Brodsky grew up in New Mexico and moved to Corvallis to attend Oregon State University a few years ago. While working toward a degree in nutrition, she maintains a very healthy lifestyle by exercising regularly and eating well. Diagnosed a few years ago with celiac sprue disease, her body is unable to tolerate gluten – making her eating habits much different than the average college co-ed.

“I can't have any wheat, so I have to be very careful,” says Brodsky. “I can't go into a Chinese restaurant and order what I want – even soy sauce contains wheat. And no beer.”

Brodsky says she is accustomed to a gluten-free lifestyle and has applied her knowledge of dietary guidelines to help others. She and a friend established a local support group for gluten intolerance as a way to educate and support people living with the condition, especially those recently diagnosed.

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Continuous glucose monitoring now available

by Debbie Pauls, RN, BSN, CDE

There are several continuous glucose monitors (CGM) available for people with diabetes today. A CGM is a device that measures glucose levels every few minutes, 24 hours a day. The glucose level is measured by a sensor that is placed under the skin (this is done at home). The reading is transmitted wirelessly to a hand held device, about the size of a cell phone and then displayed for you to read.

Some of the benefits include showing patterns of your glucose fluctuations over time as a visual. Seeing what your trends have been, can help you make better decisions on insulin management for the future. In addition, the sensor can alert you when your glucose level goes below or above a certain alarm limit that you set with the help of your doctor or diabetes educator, thus preventing a low or extreme high before it occurs. It also alerts you to rapid drops or rises in your glucose level, again, helping you plan for

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Clinical trials key to advancement

When Sandy Brown went in for a routine physical, she learned about an exciting opportunity in the treatment of her diabetes. Brown's health care provider told her about a clinical research study at The Corvallis Clinic for a new diabetes medicine.

Brown, a school bus driver from Sweet Home, participated in the study, which paid for her medical care and reimbursed her for time and travel. She described it as a positive and beneficial experience. "I've enjoyed it," she said. "I would encourage other people to participate."

For patients with medical conditions, there are many benefits to participating in a research study. Patients who volunteer have access to new therapies which are not currently available outside of the study. And studies often pay for a patient's medical care, medications and other study-related costs, such as travel.

Clinical research studies test the safety, effectiveness and side effects of an investigational medicine or devices. Participation in a study is always voluntary. Through research, new advances in medicine, such as information about diseases and their treatment, are uncovered. Physicians and patients at The Corvallis Clinic participated in the study for the diabetes medication Januvia, which was later approved by the FDA.

Medicines and therapies are carefully monitored and explore the safety and usefulness of new therapies under controlled conditions. Physicians, research project managers, nurses and lab technicians work together on studies.

Because of the strict supervision, patients are often seen more frequently than if they were not participating in a study. Brown said she appreciates the extra attention she received.

"The benefit for me was being in touch with the doctor more often," she said.

To learn more about becoming a study volunteer, ask your doctor if a study is right for you, or call (541) 754-1398, Option 6. Information on currently-enrolling studies is also available on the Web at www.corvallisclinic.com/research.

Conversation maps promote sharing and collaboration

by Elizabeth Mahn, RN



On Feb. 21, I had the opportunity to participate in the Portland Diabetes Expo, working with other educators representing the Merck Journey for Control Program.

The Journey for Control Conversation Map is a new educational tool that many diabetes educators across the country and Canada are now using to educate people in the management of their diabetes. The program includes five colorful "conversation" maps which encourage interactive participation and informative and meaningful discussions amongst each other in a class or group situation.

Each map covers a different topic:

- On the road to better managing your diabetes
- Diabetes and healthy eating
- Monitoring your blood glucose
- Continuing your journey with diabetes
- Caring for gestational diabetes

Participating in this expo with the conversation map was a wonderful experience for me. I believe the conversation maps are a motivating and encouraging tool for patients that helps them verbalize their feelings and hear how other people are handling the same situations.

To demonstrate the power of these maps, we invited expo attendees to participate in a map session. The feedback we got was positive and helped us understand better how we want to use the maps in the Samaritan Diabetes Education program.



TIP OF THE QUARTER

How to make the most out of your doctor appointments

By Debbie Pauls, RN, BSN, CDE

Do you ever wonder how to make the most of your appointments with your health care provider? The following tips will make it easier for you and your provider to cover everything you need to talk about during your brief appointment.

1. Make a list of your concerns and questions and prioritize them.
2. Take information with you, such as your blood glucose log book, medication and food records, insurance records, etc.
3. Make sure you can see and hear as well as possible. Bring your glasses, hearing aids and, possibly, a family member or friend to help you understand the information being given to you.
4. Let your provider know what has happened in your life since your last visit. (Have you been to another specialist, the emergency room, have you had changes in weight, sleep patterns or energy levels?)

There are more helpful tips on this topic and others at the U.S. National Institutes of Health's Web site at www.nia.nih.gov/HealthInformation.

Ask a CDE ...

By Teresa Cochran, MS, RD, LD, CDE

Q. How much Vitamin E should I take?

Claims, benefits: Helps prevent cancer, heart disease, cataracts.

Grounds for concern: Unlike nutrients in food, it is possible that antioxidant supplements in high doses may upset the antioxidant balance in the body.

A. The current RDA for adults is 15 mg (22.5 IU)/day. Many clinical results for Vitamin E are inconclusive. Most of these studies have been done on patients with

heart disease, so it is possible that there would be a more consistent protective benefit for healthy people. Scientists at Oregon State University's Linus Pauling Institute feel there is credible evidence that taking a supplement of 200 IU of natural source d- α -tocopherol daily with a meal may help protect adults from many chronic diseases. This recommendation is also appropriate for older adults. It is difficult to get that much Vitamin E from food unless you eat huge amounts of nuts, seeds or oils, all high in fat. Look for "natural"

Vitamin E supplements containing "mixed tocopherols", since synthetic E largely contains forms that are poorly utilized by the body. Supplements containing 200 IU are often as expensive as those containing 400 IU of d- α -tocopherol. A less expensive alternative may be to take 400 IU every other day. It is important that Vitamin E supplements be taken with a meal containing some fat.

Bottom line: It may be safe to consume 200 IU/day or 400 IUs every other day.

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food, activities and other factors affecting your blood glucose level. Wearing a continuous glucose sensor does not eliminate the need for fingerstick blood sugar testing. Regular fingersticks still need to be done in order to calibrate the sensor. And because there is a certain period of “lag time” between the glucose level that the sensor is reading in interstitial fluid vs. the glucose level in blood testing, the manufacturers recommend always “checking your blood sugar level with a fingerstick before deciding whether to give insulin, or how much.” Much of the value in using CGM comes from the ability to observe your patterns over time, monitor your glucose levels while sleeping, and to receive alerts to changes in your glucose levels before you may “sense” them yourself.

We may recommend this tool if we’re having difficulty determining your insulin needs, or you’re experiencing wide glucose excursions. Each of Samaritan Diabetes Education offices in the valley has continuous glucose monitors available for short-term patient use.

The Medtronic Real Time sensor, which is available with the Paradigm Insulin Pump system, the Freestyle Navigator and the Dexcom 7 are systems that are available for purchase.

Talk to your diabetes educator if you’re considering this option for your diabetes management.

Diabetes education and support

UpBeat for Life!

Cardiac/diabetes support group

Corvallis: (541) 768-6973

Sweet Home: (541) 466-5589

Diabetes foot clinic

Albany: (541) 812-4072

Corvallis: (541) 768-6973

Lebanon: (541) 451-6313

Diabetes support

Albany: (541) 812-4839

Lincoln City: (541) 574-4682

Newport: (541) 574-4682

Siletz: (541) 444-9647

Waldport: (541) 265-6611 ext. 2432

Diabetes management

Albany: (541) 812-4839

Corvallis: (541) 768-6973

Lebanon: (541) 451-6313

Lincoln City and Newport: (541) 574-4682

Diabetes prevention: a guide to better health

Albany: (541) 812-4839

Corvallis: (541) 768-6973

Lebanon: (541) 451-6313

Living Well with Chronic Conditions

Depoe Bay, Lincoln City, Newport, Waldport
and Yachats: (541) 265-6611 ext. 2432

Linn and Benton counties: (541) 451-6466

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“It can be really difficult to eliminate gluten from your diet at first,” she explains. “It’s in everything. I’ve worked at a health food store, so I know about many of the gluten-free products. Some taste bad and most are really expensive. It’s nice to share this information with people before they have to test it all themselves.”

While Brodsky has a handle on celiac sprue, she says diabetes management continues to challenge her. She recently switched from insulin pens to a pump, and is excited about the equipment’s possibilities.

“The pump can really work just like a pancreas,” she says. “I’ve heard people rave about it. But, I’m still adjusting to it and having some difficulties.”

After a recent poor reaction to the pump, Brodsky visited Good Samaritan Regional Medical Center and had her insulin changed. She says she still has a lot of fine-tuning to do, but she’s looking forward to easier days ahead.

But, even through the challenges, Brodsky finds time to be a regular, arguably exceptional, college student. She recently performed in a local production of the musical “Chicago,” and finds time for friends and other activities. She’s even become a volunteer with the Good Samaritan Diabetes Educator group.

“Once I finish my degree and a clinical internship, I plan to become a diabetes educator,” says Brodsky. “I’ve never let diabetes get in my way and I would love to help other people do the same.”

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