

Diabetes submission - Anonymous (Fareed Qureshi)

Blog post

Version control:

Version	Author name	Date	Comment
1.0	Fareed Qureshi	15-10-2024	First Draft
2.0	David Whitaker	22-10-2024	Second Draft
3.0			Third Draft

Title: Learning to raise a type 1 diabetic

When my 5-year-old was diagnosed with type 1 diabetes, I felt like I fell into a world I knew nothing about.

It was a Tuesday morning, and my partner and I could tell something was off. Recently, our son had been drinking more water than normal, feeling more tired, and needing to go to the bathroom more frequently. We'd thought it was just a seasonal infection or some minor sickness, but then he had a fit – We rushed him to hospital.

After he was stabilised, the doctors delivered their diagnosis – He had type 1 diabetes. And my heart dropped.

As an Indian mother, I immediately started worrying about what his future would hold:

- Could he live a normal life?

- Will he have problems at school?
- How will this affect him mentally and emotionally?

What I didn't know at the time, was that our entire community would rally around us and help him manage his condition.

Getting started

In the spotless crisis centre room, with machines whirring and beeping all around us, we were given a quick overview of type 1 diabetes.

The expert presented us with information full of clinical terms we didn't understand, and provided a complex schedule for checking glucose levels and injecting insulin.

On the surface, I kept nodding like I understood everything. But inside, I was overwhelmed – We'd gone from being confident, capable protectors to confused novices facing a disease we didn't know how to shield our son from.

That first night back at home, I couldn't sleep. Instead, I tiptoed back and forth to our son's room, terrified that if I didn't I'd miss a sign of danger.

Every time I checked his glucose level I was filled with anxiety, and I didn't know whether I'd ever feel settled again.

Coming to terms with our new normal

Managing type 1 diabetes isn't just a matter of taking a test or medication – It's a complete lifestyle change.

From meal management to school planning, every part of our regular timetable needed to be reviewed and revised. I used to pack our son's lunchbox easily and decisively, but now I had to consider every meal's impact on his glucose level.

There were further unexpected social hardships as well. At school, our son had to explain to his friends why he couldn't share the pastries they brought in to celebrate birthdays or other festivities. A couple of kids got it, but others started to treat him as 'different' – As a mother, it was hard watching him face these new challenges.

Similarly, we had to face societal challenges. Disorders like diabetes can often be seen as a point of shame and family members encouraged us not to discuss his diagnosis too openly fearing it would make him 'ineligible for marriage' later on – While I understand their nervousness, I refused to hide our son's condition. It was a fundamental part of his life, part of our family's circumstances, and I wanted him to grow up feeling happy and accepted, not humiliated.

Moving forward

After a while, we found a rhythm that worked for our friends and family.

We became more knowledgeable and confident about managing his insulin, and our son accepted his new normal.

The initial anxiety slowly gave way to acceptance, and later trust.

Our son showed amazing strength. He never complained about his condition, even when it interfered with his ability to eat the pastries and treats he once loved. And he worked out how to handle his injections, and how to respond to the strange requests and questions from his classmates – He even managed to turn them into opportunities to instruct and educate.

As a mother, I learned to focus on what I could control, and let go of what I couldn't. And I keep up with the latest news, research and advances because diabetes treatment technology and medication keep getting better, and that means my son's life can get even better too.

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Post summary:

At 5 years old, Devika's son was diagnosed with type 1 diabetes and their whole world changed. But together they learned how to manage their new normal.

Biography:

N/A

Tags:

Type 1 diabetes, mental health, caregivers

Quote:

"When my 5-year-old was diagnosed with type 1 diabetes, I felt like I fell into a world I knew nothing about – But we found our way through."