Diabetes SA
Support Always

Kellion Victory Medal Awards 2022

We're here to listen, here to advise, here to help lighten the load of living with diabetes.

Support always… 69 years and beyond

Back in 1952 the co-discoverer of insulin, Dr Charles Best, travelled to South Australia to give a series of lectures.

During an impassioned speech, he suggested that a diabetic association be established here in our state.

The very next year our organisation opened its doors.

We've now celebrated over 69 years at the frontline of diabetes support in South Australia.

We're here to help people living with diabetes.

To empower people with information, education and understanding.

To ensure they have access to products and services that help them manage their diabetes.

To raise awareness of the risk of diabetes in our community and facilitate early detection and prevention programs.

To fund new research to discover new treatments for the many South Australians living with or at risk of diabetes today.

Most of all, we're here to give people personalised, individual support whenever they need it.

Kellion Victory Medal Recipients 2022

The Kellion Victory Medal was named after Claude Kellion when diabetes claimed the life of his son John Claude. A successful business man, Claude established the Kellion Diabetes Foundation in John's memory. In view of his outstanding contribution towards diabetes in Australia, Mr Claude Kellion AM was invited to have his name associated with the Kellion Victory Medal Scheme.

The Kellion Victory Medal Scheme was established to recognise those living with type 1 or type 2 diabetes for 50 years or more. Award medals and certificates are presented to all recipients. The 50-year medal is silver, the 60-year medal is gold, 70-year medal is platinum, 75-year medal is diamond with 80 or 85-year awards discussed with the recipient.

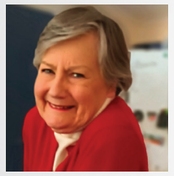
A further addition to the Kellion Victory Medals Scheme is the Kellion Carer's Award. Having diabetes affects the whole family. The carer plays a major role in assisting a person with diabetes to live a full and satisfying lifestyle; the Kellion Carer's Award recognises many years of love, dedication and support.

Read the full stories of our South Australian Kellion Victory Medal recipients in this booklet, or visit diabetessa.com.au.

75 years of living with type 1 diabetes

Margaret Speechley

The recipient has respectfully chosen not to share their story or picture.



70 years of living with type 1 diabetes

Patricia Richards

I like to think that since my diagnosis of diabetes when I was nine years old, that medical research has been and still is working towards making life easier for people living with diabetes, their families and the medical profession.

My introduction to diabetes was abrupt and unexpected, but also a learning experience in very many ways. Whilst in hospital, I was shown how to use a Bunsen burner and what chemicals to put into a test tube along with urine. This was the only way I could keep a check on my diabetes when I went home. I was not particularly impressed with this process.

Fortunately for me and many others, along came Clinitest tablets, and many thanks to whomever came up with that idea. This was one step towards making life easier and safer.

I was the only child at my school with diabetes. This wasn't unusual, but it was occasionally difficult, especially when having a hypoglycaemic reaction. As most of the other students had never heard of diabetes, I wouldn't have been surprised to find that their parents had no idea about it either.

After high school, I won a scholarship at The Ealing School of Art, and my parents decided to migrate to Adelaide. I decided that I would like to teach, so I studied part-time and worked part-time. This was made much harder because of my diabetes. The hypoglycaemic reactions were a problem and sometimes quite unexpected, but I learnt to recognise early symptoms. This helped especially when teaching.

I married and have two children and now four grandchildren. Having diabetes and being pregnant was not easy and caused a lot of worry and a few problems. There was not a lot of information about pregnancy and diabetes - thank goodness things have improved. Trying to keep stabilised was difficult, with only urine testing and a weekly blood test.

But in a quiet determined way, medical science had been beavering away in the background, and they came up with the blood glucose monitoring system. Looking like a brick and quite heavy, it did not fit into the usual handbag. However, it was worth its weight in gold. Now we have credit card sized BGM, and they can test for ketones, which we hadn't heard of. Of course, we learnt that they were going to be part of our lives, especially if we are ill.

Hot on the heels of that invention came the disposable syringes, improved insulin, and now insulin pumps. And just to keep us on our toes, the pump has a sensor which is aligned with our mobile phone. Looking after our health has been made easier.

For a health problem mentioned in ancient Egyptian and Greek writings, diabetes has been a part of people's lives, through every generation until the 1920s, when two doctors developed insulin. Before, there was little hope of leading a normal life.

Hopefully, we will have the opportunity to share some of the developments in the future, and we at least can look forward, which for previous generations was not a possibility. Thank you to all the inquiring and creative minds of the medical profession, for without your work, I doubt I would have had a history.

70 years of living with type 1 diabetes

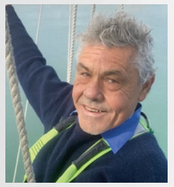
Elizabeth Flint

The recipient has respectfully chosen not to share their story or picture.

60 years of living with type 1 diabetes

Beverley Deren

The recipient has respectfully chosen not to share their story.



60 years of living with type 1 diabetes

Brian Wood

Sixty short years of llfe with type 1 diabetes

My mother first noticed that I had become a waif at five years of age. I had just started primary school and apparently cried at any moment. My mum asked me "Do you not like school?' I replied "Yes, but I cannot remember much of what was happening at school." My mum also noticed that the toilet floor, where I had misaimed during the passing of urine, was sticky and covered in small ants. She wondered if I had diabetes. On consulting the local country GP, and the start of a lifetime of blood tests, I was diagnosed with type 1 diabetes.

I was then seen by Dr. Covington, who organised an insulin injecting regime. Thereafter, I did not see another endocrinologist for over ten years!! Unheard of by today's standards.

I have always tried not to use my diabetes as an excuse to not lead a normal life. Sixty years later, and some 4 million decisions about how to live life, here I am.

Despite the inherent and associated retinopathy and impending renal failure, I long for the day when I do not share my life with a chronic disease. Every person living with type 1 diabetes needs an understanding to keep an eye on their well-being. Hoping to see you all in another ten years.

60 years of living with type 1 diabetes

Maureen Turner

My journey with diabetes started when I was seven years old. I was living with my parents in a little farming community on the Eyre Peninsula. They were getting concerned when I was drinking and going to the toilet lots, so they took me to the doctor at Cleve. He said, “Get her to the Adelaide Children’s Hospital as soon as possible”. This happened in August 1962 and was a six-hour drive from our home. Thus began my journey of dipsticks, fingerpricks and CGMs.

My parents positively supported me throughout my childhood and teenage years. I attended boarding school in Adelaide for four years. To the disappointment of other boarders, I got the ‘nicer desserts’, stewed fruit. I married my husband in 1977, and he became my ‘Diabetes Cop’ (and still is) and has been a wonderful support!!

In 1978, I was given a loan of a blood tester (the size of a thin brick) to start testing my BGLs, because we were attempting to have a family. Before the blood tester, I used the urinary dip stick method to monitor sugar levels. The blood glucose monitors got smaller and smaller and were much more convenient to use and put in my handbag. At the beginning, I used a ‘gun’ to inject insulin and started using an insulin pump in about 2004. I have been using the CGMs off and on since 2018.

I also took part in various trials for diabetes through Ashford Hospital and the Lyell McEwin Hospital.

Diabetes has not stopped me from playing sport in the past, or doing any other activities. I keep reasonably active in my community. We do a lot of caravanning around Australia and have travelled overseas a couple of times. This has all required pre-planning, organising letters, and obtaining sufficient supplies before we leave.

With the support of my Endocrinologists, Educators, GPs, and Ophthalmologist, I don’t suffer from any of the ‘-opathies’ associated with diabetes. For this, I am very thankful.

60 years of living with type 1 diabetes

Elizabeth Whetham

Short history of Libby Whetham’s life living with diabetes.

Diagnosed in 1962 at four years of age, I am forever grateful for three things in living a life with diabetes.

First, the constant care and support of my parents (and three older sisters) in my younger years. They measured carbs on scales, tested my urine, gave injections, sent me off to camps for children with diabetes, and encourged me to live life and pursue my dreams.

Second, my first regular endocrinologist at the RAH who emphasised that no-one would ever know more about my diabetes than I would, but nevertheless taught me all he could to help me self-manage it.

Third, I am very thankful that so far I have had no major long-term complications.

A few flashbacks to my early years in primary school. None of the kids played with me because their parents had told them that diabetes was contagious. Being slapped on the back of the hand in Grade 2 because my writing was too small, and feeling the injustice of my teacher not apologising when it turned out I was having a hypo! Thrilled that my parents trusted me to go on a netball trip to the Riverland in Grade 7 - my very first trip away from home, staying with people who knew nothing about diabetes.

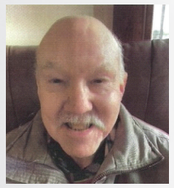
Fast forward to life in my teens and beyond. I had a passion for learning about other cultures and languages from a very early age. I was privileged to study linguistics, anthropology and several languages and have lived and worked as a teacher of English as a second language in Australia, Jordan and the United Arab Emirates. Learning how to politely refuse zealous Arab hospitality in the form of great cuisine was a major challenge to managing my diabetes!

I married on my return to Australia in my mid-thirties and gave birth to two precious, healthy daughters. My endocrinologist at the time (in Wollongong) described himself as a Prussian officer. That did not go down well! I had, after all, self-managed my diabetes for most of my six years in the Middle East. Ah well. We got through.

Over the years, I’ve experienced several episodes of depression, including a particularly long episode over the past 2½ years mixed with anxiety. It has been a rough journey but has also given me the opportunity to learn new coping skills and continue to appreciate the value of diet and exercise, routines and rest. I am thankful that I have been blessed with a wonderful, supportive husband of 30 years and our two adult daughters.

It has always been one of my greatest joys to help raise our daughters and watch them grow into strong, independent women. But as someone who knows first-hand the constancy of managing diabetes daily, I shed many tears when our eldest daughter was diagnosed with type 1 at the age of 12. She then began her own, often difficult, journey of living life with diabetes, a challenge nevertheless she has faced with courage. She has become my role model in many ways, especially as she embraces the new technologies.

60 years of living with type 1 diabetes



Ian Symonds

I was born on 25 July 1950 and was diagnosed with type 1 diabetes on Monday 1st October 1962. I attended Jamestown Primary School 1955-1961, Jamestown High School 1962-1966 and Westminster School in 1967. In 1968, I returned home to work on the farm with my father.

In January 1978, I married Margaret Bain. We have been together for 44 years and have three children, Jacqui born 1980, Angie born 1981, and Dan born 1985.

In my opinion, the first important improvement in diabetes management was the introduction of Continuous Glucose Monitors (CGM). These allowed the user to control their blood sugar readings more easily and prevent hypoglycaemia and hyperglycaemia. I started using my Dexcom G4 six years ago and graduated to the G6 two years ago. The latter is a great improvement on the original machine, and I have yet to be convinced to try an Insulin pump.

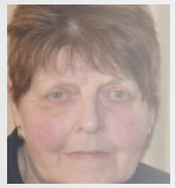
In 2002, on advice of my GP of many years, I leased the farm. This meant that other farmers of my nomination could use the land for cropping, merino wool production, fat lamb production and other farming pursuits. This left me with other farm jobs, such as windmill repair and keeping fencing in good order – the most important jobs that were also very physically demanding.

I have been involved with the Jamestown Lions Club since 1977, being President for five years and Secretary for three.

And so, in November 2011, with much regret, we sold the farm but kept Section 320 of Belalie, which contained the farmhouse, water supply and all farm shedding. We still live in the farmhouse and have spent quite a bit of money on keeping it in good order. In April last year, we held an afternoon at the farmhouse to celebrate 100 years since it was built.

And so, through all of this, I have done my best to manage my type 1 diabetes. At times I suppose I feel quite dejected, but with the help of my wife and my CGM, I pull through. I guess my next challenge is getting to 70 years with type 1.

60 years of living with type 1 diabetes



Sandra Phillips

Twelve months after receiving my Kellion Medal, having achieved 50 years of living with type 1 diabetes, I noticed a small tear on my left shin, which was weeping. A nurse told me at the Flinders Vascular Clinic not to worry about it, and that it will be OK. It soon increased in size and was then diagnosed as an ulcer.

The clinic treated it for a while and subsequently referred me to RDNS. They visited every day to dress the wound. Then after a couple of years would come three times a week. I can't thank them enough for all the good work they have done. After nine years, it is nearly healed.

I am also on a waiting list for a shoulder reconstruction, but they will not proceed with an operation until the wound is healed due to risk of infection post op.

My husband has been a great help, doing the washing, cleaning, cooking etc.

I also have osteoarthritis in both my knees. Orthopaedic surgeons have assessed the knees and won't operate due to a high-risk factor. I have to use two walking sticks to get around the house. I also have a walker and a mobility scooter to aid me when visiting shopping centres.

However, despite these issues, my diabetes is well-controlled, and I feel fine.

60 years of living with type 1 diabetes

Phillip Nicholas

I am Phil Nicholas and I was diagnosed with type 1 diabetes over 60 years ago.

My acceptance of this disease and maintaining good management, control and self-discipline have given me a very active normal lifestyle from diagnosis, including surfing, snow skiing, windsurfing, fishing, camping, travelling and regular attendance at the gym.

I commenced a career in signwriting at 16 and went on to run my own successful Sign Business for fifty years. I am married and have two wonderful married sons and four grandchildren. My medical team including Bob Burston, Steve Judd, Hamish Eaton, Danny Byrne and educators, Chris Bormann and Pam Smith, are great.

I have been on an insulin pump for the last 13 years, so have seen significant developments in monitoring blood sugar levels more accurately to improve long-term health.

Despite these advances, they should not overshadow the good health and lifestyle choices we should make for ourselves.

60 years of living with type 1 diabetes

Alan Howard

In 1962 aged 14, I was diagnosed with type 1 diabetes. After a prolonged hospitalisation, I resumed secondary schooling, later attended SA School of Art, and graduated as a graphic designer.

I have maintained a healthy, active lifestyle, which has assisted with my management and control of diabetes and is enhanced with new technology by way of glucose sensor monitoring.

Though diabetes is challenging and ever-present, it hasn't prevented me from achieving and pursuing my goals in life.

I'm proud and grateful to reach this milestone, thankful to health professionals that have been an integral part of my 60 year journey.

Grateful to my wife and family, including five grandchildren. My grandson Noah 17, and granddaughter Eloise, 13, were diagnosed with type 1 diabetes in 2015 and 2016, respectively.

I trust this award will be an encouragement and inspire them to live and pursue their dreams.

60 years of living with type 1 diabetes

Margaret Beelitz

For the last 60 years, having diabetes has had its ups and downs. In the earlier years, Mum said that it was a lot of "guess" work when working out insulin doses etc. There were no blood glucose machines, and the injections were like a scientific apparatus. I was just seven years old when I was diagnosed with diabetes. It was something the family had never heard of therefore I spent a lot of time in and out of the hospital.

Today, managing diabetes is so much easier as there are not as many restrictions in your life. I have not let diabetes take over and restrict my lifestyle. I have achieved as much as I can playing sports, including golf, tennis and netball, and competitive shooting in my younger years. I am a very active person in the community, running the local post office, working in the local craft shop, and being a member of the SACWA.

I have been very fortunate that I have not had any diabetes complications with my health.

I am married to Don and have a daughter and son who are twins. We live on a farm that has been in the family for four generations, and I also have 2 gorgeous grandchildren who I often look after.

60 years of living with type 1 diabetes

Michael Summers

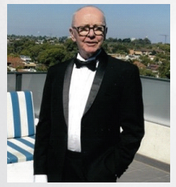
Sixty years ago, I was diagnosed with diabetes. Life now is having to have injections for the rest of my life. The good doctor said, "It won't cure you but it will keep you alive." How true. There were no such things as disposable needles or blood glucose monitors, only a glass syringe and a couple of needles which had to be boiled each time before each injection.

I'm glad it was only one injection a day and not the four times a day I'm on now.

In the earlier years, I travelled overseas a lot, using a small electric jug designed to heat babies' milk bottles. My travelling days are over due to heart conditions, which restricts me from motoring long distances.

I have settled down on a small farm with a dog as company, and it requires a walk every night, irrespective of the weather, so it's a good source of exercise they say.

60 years of living with type 1 diabetes



Peter William Leesue

In January 1947, I was 15 years old, and my mother (who had been working as a nurse prior to marriage) noticed that I was drinking a lot of water, visiting the toilet often and losing weight, so she sent me to the local GP who diagnosed what mum had suspected...type 1 diabetes.

I was sent to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital at Woodville where a Dr Burston took on control of stabilising me. He introduced me to the types of insulin that were available at that time, one was pork-based, and the other was beef-based, and both were very thick and hard to inject.

Syringes were made of glass, and the needles were steel and had to be boiled each day before use. By day five, the needle was getting blunt, and the process was very painful. A new needle was only available monthly. That was 1962.

About 1965, disposable syringes and needles were introduced, making daily treatment much easier. New synthetic insulins were being introduced making control easier. At about the same time, glucose testing went from litmus paper testing of urine to finger pricking and blood testing.

Now 60 years on, the FreeStyle Libre 2 system of control is making life even easier, and other advances like insulin pumps are making peoples' lives more comfortable.

With Gail, my wife of 45 years helping me, caring for me and supporting me, I have been able to live a full and satisfying life. This was despite a heart attack, triple bypass, two strokes, amputation of a toe and a few other medical problems to distract me!

I have now gone full circle and am back attending professional diabetes care.

60 years of living with type 1 diabetes

Anthony Nagy

As a small child with undiagnosed diabetes, I cried a lot and mum thought she'd be arrested. Once I was diagnosed, I used an old luer lock syringe in a glass tray with methylated spirits and Isophone insulin. The next change was two injections per day, and finally, Novorapid and Levemir four times per day.

I've long since learned that regular exercise helps my control and I bicycle most days. A few years ago I used to have McDonalds for breakfast five days per week. Since then, I've improved my diet with much-improved food. In the bad old days, I regularly had hypoglycaemic reactions requiring hospitalisation. An accident and emergency sister advised me I might die if I continued in this way, so I changed my behaviour and diet as a result. I now sleep a lot better with far fewer hypoglycaemic reactions.

50 years of living with type 1 diabetes

Linda Rheinberger

Years prior to diagnosis I was a sleepy baby after contracting mumps at two weeks old.

In 1967 I was the only child with diabetes in a small rural New South Wales town, so my treatment was very different to what it is today. I remember testing my urine in a test tube and my mother boiling the glass syringe and needles weekly. The concept of five needles per day, or even an insulin pump, was nowhere on the horizon with a single dose each morning.

I had to navigate good and bad advice from health professionals. Bad advice, including that I could have sugar in coffee now, even though I had been sugar-free for over 25 years. I welcome a new era of positive reinforcement rather than blaming the person having a go living their life with diabetes.

I attribute my success to my mother, who very early on said, "you will feel better if you get up and get dressed and go to school." Although my mother must have been very worried, especially during my teenage years, she was adamant that there would be no feeling sorry for yourself. Linda also attributes her success to her husband and family, who probably don't realise it but provide her with support every day and are always there for her.

50 years of living with type 1 diabetes

Malcolm Hinchliffe

A condensed version of my life with diabetes.

At twelve years old, the doctor came out and said I had a perforated rib cage, while getting sicker mum took me to Adelaide Children's Hospital. Instant diagnosis of diabetes.

What was this condition?

I had a four month stay in the hospital getting 2ml soluble insulin, receiving very unpredictable, massive needles and litmus paper, followed by clinitest tablets. I was always hoping for a blue result which was negative but nearly always getting the dreaded bright orange positive. Later they used clinistixs that were crude to say the least. I survived until new insulins, not derived from animals, were introduced and finally, blood tests to manage. Every three months I had to go to the hospital for supplies and check-ups.

I accepted my condition. In school, I was charging kids 50c to watch me jab myself. I was the only diabetic kid in primary and high school, so teachers did not understand and gave me a hard time until I rebelled and finally left high school in second year.

I rode my motorbike to Kalgoorlie, and at sixteen, I rode horses, and did endurance riding and rodeos. I married and had kids and later, at forty, I had two more daughters. I drove semis all over Australia, managing my diabetes quite well. I learnt more from diabetic nurses and found I could teach some doctors about diabetes. In 2020 I had a heart attack, had a double bypass and survived.

I am now sixty-five years old, my diabetes has never slowed me down, and I've had quite an eventful life for now.

50 years of living with type 1 diabetes

Christine Turner

I was diagnosed with type 1 diabetes in 1970 at age 14 after experiencing excessive thirst and weight loss, along with a tooth abscess which would not heal. There was no prior family history.

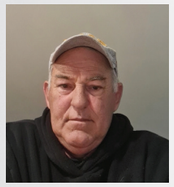
My parents took on the task of administering the dreaded daily morning injection for many years. They used a glass syringe which was stored in methylated spirits and sterilised weekly in boiling water, until I finally overcame the apprehension with the aid of a hypoguard. Endless finger pricks and urine testing strips ensued, which was a chore to say the least!

Needless to say not the happiest time and I'm sure it was not something I took seriously in those early years.

It was then that I started on four injections per day, one before each meal and again at bedtime. So thankful now for the progress which has been made and now use a flex pen four times daily.

But the Freestyle Libra 2 sensor has been a godsend, helping maintain steady blood sugar levels day and night. I don't know how I managed without it and consider myself very lucky to have good health and be able to enjoy several games of pickleball each week, which I love!

50 years of living with type 1 diabetes



Brian Martin

I was diagnosed with type 1 diabetes in 1970 while I was away on holiday with my parents.

I was in hospital at Victor Harbor for two weeks and then to Gawler for another two weeks.

I've seen a lot of changes in my 52-year living with diabetes.

I would like to thank my GPs, Dr Geoff Hyde, Dr Mark Reid and Dr Brown from Gawler and my diabetes specialist Anthony Zimmermann for my care living with diabetes.

50 years of living with type 1 diabetes

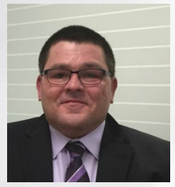
David Weidenbach

I was born on the 29th September 1956, and diagnosed with diabetes when I was 17.

My wife Kylie and I have four children, Ben, Scott, Todd and Ebony, and six grandchildren.

When I was 35 years old, I became legally blind after a car accident, and in 2009/2010 unfortunately, my legs were amputated below the knee due to diabetic ulcers. I live with my wife and four cats that keep me company throughout the day.

50 years of living with type 1 diabetes



Robert Williams

I was diagnosed with Juvenile Diabetes when I was almost 4 years of age. Diabetes didn't run in the family and the doctors put it down to a few accidental traumas I experienced in a relatively short space of time. In saying this, my father, brother and sister all have thyroid issues which fall into the same organ group.

In my early years I remember spending a lot of time in the Children's hospital trying to get my levels in order, this was back in the days of 1 injection a day so it was extremely difficult to get it right. I remember it was the Colton Ward and my first Endocrinologist was Dr Jim Penfold.

Growing up I was fairly popular and having diabetes didn't affect making friends too much. I do recall some friends parents being a little nervous when I was invited to birthday parties but I knew what I could and couldn't eat so it was okay.

I do remember getting teased a few times about not being able to eat chocolate and lollies when I was in Junior Primary School. I remember a couple of girls pointing at me and saying don't go near him he has diabetes which at the time upset me but looking back at it later, I realised that they wouldn't even have known what a diabetic was just that I was one and they didn't want to CATCH it.

It took me a while but I eventually learnt that eating too many chocolates or lollies meant one thing, hospital and a drip in my hand to help with my dehydration! It certainly wasn't fun.

A couple of things that I did find helpful were a diabetic camp I went to when I was much younger. The camp was held at Mylor and meeting all these other diabetics helped me realise that I wasn't the only one and that it was a lot more common than I thought. Also a friend of mine that grew up around the corner from home was diagnosed so I was no longer the only diabetic at school.

I played a lot of sport growing up and I learnt to allow for this so my diabetes didn't hinder me too much. Sure there was the occasional low but I had learnt that cordial and jelly beans were my best friends when it came to sport.

Now that I have had diabetes for 50 years, I am thankful that the many possible complications haven't affected me too much. Although I have had numerous eye operations and lost a big toe a few years ago I can still see and walk okay and am able to do most things that a 54 year old should be able to.

One of the things about having diabetes for so long is seeing the advancement in diabetes care. Some things I remember from my early years were my mum and dad boiling the old glass syringe with close to a 2 inch needle on it. This needle was used until it would literally no longer pierce the skin. The earlier insulins I used were Rapitard, Monotard and Actrapid and this was derived from pigs before human developed insulin was introduced many years later.

I remember urine testing my glucose levels, using drops of water and urine in a test tube, adding a tablet and seeing what colour it ended up. Purple was negative (too low) and different shades of orange were, 1 plus, 2 pluses or 3 pluses (way too high).

These days we have blood testing, disposable syringes, insulin pens and insulin pumps. I am due to start on continual glucose monitoring soon so I am really looking forward to learning all about that and obviously the benefits that it will provide.

50 years of living with type 1 diabetes

Michelle Ann Robinson

My life became very different at 5 years of age after being diagnosed with diabetes. Having these needles every day and having to do regular urine tests to check my sugar levels. I remember mum having to boil the glass syringes to sterilise them and the length of the needles was terrifying for me as a small child. It is the main thing that I remember.

A lot has changed over the years. With the injections and blood testing to now being able to wear a device to test sugar levels and not having to do finger pricks multiple times a day. I have seen so many changes in diet as well. The strict diet as a child to now being a little bit more flexible with food.

I remember going on a camp to Mylor when I was about 10 years old and this is when I first started to do the injections myself with a lot of encouragement from the staff. This made my life so much easier, being able to go out with friends and doing my injections. Also being able to go on holidays without mum there to do my injections.

I have seen so many improvements with diabetes management that we can only hope that one day there will be a cure.

50 years of living with type 1 diabetes

Rachel Woods

I was diagnosed with type 1 diabetes at the age of two in 1971, six months after having measles. I had classic symptoms of extreme thirst, rapid weight loss, and my parents thought this could have been an after-effect of measles. But when they saw me drinking out the cat's bowl, they thought something was wrong and took me to the doctors.

There was no blood glucose monitoring until about 1978, so my parents had to rely on urine testing of glucose, which was inaccurate. A couple of incidents required the Glucagen Hypokit as a child, but my parents did a great job managing this. We lived in the country, and no one knew much about type 1 diabetes, including the local GPs.

When I was very young, my mum had to hold me down, and my father injected me with insulin. The glass syringes were re-sterilised on the stove, and the long metal needle was re-used over and over again and became blunt. I did my first injection at the age of eight.

I hated urine testing, as this was inconvenient and, as we now know, inaccurate, and the older blood glucose meters were not accurate either. Having diabetes from age two enabled me to adjust, and it became the norm.

I remember at age seven, a young doctor at the Women's and Children's hospital told my mother it would be likely I would have a leg amputated and not be able to become pregnant and have children plus more complications. At that time, I was determined not to let that happen and worked hard to look after myself. I had excellent support at home.

Attending the diabetes children and teenage camps was an influential part in where my future would lead. I thought living was diabetes was easy, but I witnessed a Diabetes Nurse Educator explaining to all the children the importance of rotating inject sites, how to look after their diabetes, and how some of the children struggled with their diabetes. At this time, I decided I could help people and endeavoured to become a Diabetes Nurse Educator. I still catch up with a friend I met at the diabetes camp. I have been working as a Diabetes Nurse Educator for about 32 years and have been a Credentialled Diabetes Educator for about 29 years.

I cannot count the number of times I have been told there will be a cure for type 1 diabetes in my lifetime, but with current research, we are getting closer.

I have three beautiful children, including twins, and my son was diagnosed with type 1 diabetes at the age of seven. He is now 21, and I'm grateful for the current technology to help him; he is managing very well.

I have not let type 1 diabetes stop me from doing anything I wanted to do, I would say I am healthier because of living with type 1 diabetes. I wouldn't be doing as well today if it wasn't for the support of my parents, my husband and family and friends.

I have met the most amazing people through living with and working with diabetes. I now manage a diabetes service and ensure that my staff are working with people living with diabetes, not judging, or telling people what to do, but supporting, counselling and working together with people living with diabetes.

50 years of living with type 1 diabetes

Wendy Wilson

My daughter Tracy, my granddaughter Erika and I all have type 1 diabetes. This is a short story of what was important to me.

When I was first diagnosed with type 1 diabetes, I was introduced to Sister Modistah, at St Andrew's Hospital. She taught me the fundamental knowledge of diabetes and maintaining a healthy diet which became my guideline for maintaining stability.

They were strict rules which I adhered to and, in turn, benefited my life. Without those strict rules, I don't believe I would be here today. I still think it was the best regime for stability.

Having a granddaughter with type 1 diabetes, I see how things are done very differently now.

I still think the old method is the best method. I am a strong believer in "you are what you eat", therefore eating and maintaining a healthy diet has enabled me to succeed in living with type 1 diabetes for 50 years.

50 years of living with type 1 diabetes

Denis White

The recipient has respectfully chosen not to share their story or picture.

50 years of living with type 1 diabetes

Elizabeth Newberry

The recipient has respectfully chosen not to share their story or picture.

Congratulations to all the Kellion Medalists!
Your stories are an inspiration to all.

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