

## Strike the Balance between Diabetes Data Overload and Emotional Wellbeing

With diabetes, your child generates boatloads of data from insulin doses, to glucose results, carb-to-insulin ratios, A1Cs, and more. Do you have Diabetes Data Overload? Are you feeling overwhelmed by all the data? At times the data is positive. Other times, it's downright disheartening or frustratingly unpredictable.

This article offers tips and strategies for you to use the data your child generates in ways that optimize their diabetes care while balancing everyone's emotional wellbeing.



### **Let go of thinking that your actions can control all the numbers.**

They're simply not all under your power. Reality is, MANY factors impact your child's glucose levels. To note just a few: timing of insulin doses, types and amounts of foods eaten, type and timing of physical activity, stress, hormonal changes ... and, yes the list goes on.



### **View each glucose and A1c result for what they are – one number in**

**time.** Consider data points as a gauge, not a report card or judgement on your or your child's actions or abilities. Observe the data points non-judgmentally. Then move on. Don't be critical of your, your child's, or other's actions. You can't change what happened. Rest assured, one glucose level or one A1C result, or even one phase of a child's life where management is less than ideal (perhaps those teenage years!), is unlikely to make the difference in developing a complication or not.



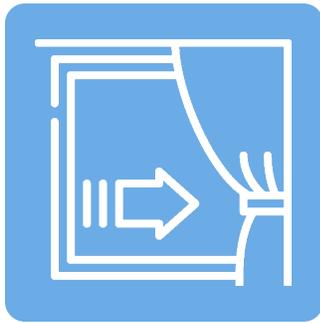
### **Observe the data efficiently and effectively.**

Look at the big picture. Take one of these actions: 1) Consider making tweaks to impact a pattern you see. 2) Keep notes of observations that you want to discuss with your providers or act on the next time the same circumstances occur. 3) Detect possible acute problems, such as onset of an illness, life stressor; or perhaps changes in the season, your child's activities, or a developmental milestone.



### **Maximize time with providers through preparation.**

Prior to visits with your diabetes healthcare providers take a look at your observations. Select sample records that exemplify your observations. Flag pertinent data points. Prepare questions you want to have answered in priority order. Taking these steps can lead to more productive conversations and better optimization of the diabetes care plan.



**Pull back the curtain to reveal real life with your providers.** Be honest. Let your providers know the realities of daily life in your child's life and other members of the family. This is critical information. Your child's diabetes care plan and self-care tasks must fit into real life if a plan, at any point in time, is going to be successful.



**Keep the conversations with your child positive.** Take the long view. See the glass half full. Focus on what you're doing right as a parent and what your child is doing right as a person managing the forever-challenging type 1 diabetes. Provide your child with age appropriate choices to manage various situations. Having them make choices, even at younger ages, can strengthen their confidence and ability to manage their diabetes. Also, identify positive actions your child is taking to manage their diabetes. Profusely compliment them on these in developmentally appropriate ways.



**Set reasonable and realistic daily diabetes self-care and data analysis goals.** You've only got so many hours in a day and raising a child with diabetes adds to your and your child's to-do list (and they're not necessarily fun!) Prioritize your and your child's (dependent on age and duration of diabetes) diabetes self-care and data analysis goals by dividing them into must-do or nice-to-do. Setting reasonable and realistic goals help you and your child meet them. Positive results make people feel successful and positive.



**Seek support from people who walk in your shoes.** Find sources of support for both you and your child whether it's in-person support groups, online connections to peers or groups, diabetes camp or other options. Make sure to have people in your life to share successes with as well as challenges. Relationships to others who deal with diabetes can be life-changing for everyone. For a child, it's valuable for them to not feel isolated and know they're the only person in their midst with type 1 diabetes.

In summary, continually try to make managing diabetes and tracking data a slice of your life rather than the centerpiece. Taking this step helps prevent Diabetes Data Overload. Your child picks up your vibes and attitudes. The more your child observes your positive attitude and how you're making lemonade from the lemon of having diabetes, the more your resilience will rub off on them. You can do this! Keep the words Tom Karlya, DRI Foundation Senior Vice President, shared in a recent DiabetesDad post top of mind: *"Living life is so much more important than diabetes. Never forget it."*

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