



100 Reasons Why

we are grateful for the
discovery of insulin



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Visit <https://www.sanofi.us/en/about-us/our-stories/making-a-difference/american-diabetes-month> to read additional stories from others living with, caring for or committed to people with diabetes.



Visit <https://www.teamingupfordiabetes.com/> for diabetes facts, videos and resources to help you build a diabetes management game plan.

CHAPTER 2

The Day I was Diagnosed with Diabetes

Part 2

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Thanksgiving Day 2008 is one day I will never forget. It was the day that my diabetes journey officially began. I was 39 years old at the time and was traveling to my hometown to spend the holiday with family. It was a three-hour trip and all I wanted was sweet liquids. The first gas station stop was a frozen cola, followed by a strawberry shake an hour later. They unfortunately made me very nauseated - too sick to drive the 3 hours that I normally handled with ease. Unfortunately, I did not get to enjoy fellowship with family or have one nibble of food that day. I was just too sick. My family gathered at my brother's home and I told my sister that I wanted her to take me to the hospital when they were done. I stayed behind and slept the day away. That night we went to the hospital and a lot of tests were run. When the doctor finally came to give me a diagnosis, he told me that I was being admitted to the hospital. My blood sugar was too high to read on a normal glucometer. I did not say one word, but my eyes told a story and he said, "Ma'am you are the only person in the ER tonight that should be here." From that point, my life changed forever.

Leola Collins

Diagnosed with diabetes in 2008



Henry Bryan

Diagnosed with diabetes in 1972



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I was diagnosed with diabetes while in the hospital with a burn injury. I was 24 years old and was asked about my family medical history which included diabetes. The doctor had me tested and it came back positive.



A nurse gave me a small list of “approved” foods, an entire book of “non-approved” foods, and not much explanation of anything else. I was also given a prescription for oral medications. I thought the diagnosis was the end of the world as I received little encouragement for managing my diabetes. It also destroyed my plans for my career, because at the time it took away my privilege to fly airplanes. I absolutely hated diabetes and everything related to it.

When I was put on insulin 16 years later, I again received very little education about it, why it was good for me, or how it could help me manage my diabetes. I was taught very little about taking injections. All of these things led me to hate diabetes even more.

However, in 1994 I met an endocrinologist who took the time to learn about me as a patient first. He began to teach me how insulin could really be my friend. He showed me that I could manage my diabetes instead of it managing me. I received much encouragement from him then and still do today.

I am very passionate about helping others with diabetes as I do not want others to go through life hating diabetes as I did.

Kristin Percy

Care Partner to daughter Kathryn



Kathryn went for her annual physical as a healthy 8-year-old. One week later we were back at the doctor and told she had croup. My mom said, "Something else is wrong with her. It's definitely not croup." Back to the doctor we went. On the way we stopped for a lemonade and ice cream to ease her sore throat. A urine test later showed a lot of sugar. I figured it was from the treats she had on the way. The doctor said we needed to go to the ER; they thought Kathryn had diabetes. I went into a private room and hysterically called my family. I knew I had to pull myself together for Kathryn's sake. We went home to get her things and Kathryn said, "Mom, I better pack a short-sleeved nightgown in case I need to have an IV." My parents were sitting at my kitchen table staring at me. My husband was cooking cheese steaks. When we checked into the ER, I told the nurse we were in no hurry as Kathryn was not feeling that bad. I always assumed ERs were for people with life threatening emergencies. I was wrong. When the receptionist heard our name, she said they had a room ready for us. The thought of having a room all set up for you in the ER really made me realize how serious this pending diagnosis was. It is a day that will forever be embedded in my mind.

Kathryn Percy

Diagnosed with diabetes in 2009



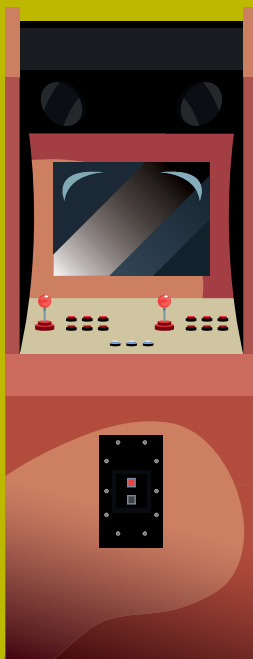
The first weekend of April 2009, I was sent to the emergency room at Boston Children's Hospital. My pediatrician had just told me that they believed I had type 1 diabetes and needed to head there immediately. I remember getting to the emergency room and my mom saying, "It's not really an emergency," but they already had a bed ready for me. After that, I spent 4 days in the hospital learning about what diabetes was and how



to treat it. I was also lucky enough to make duct tape wallets, remix CDs, and have a therapy dog. Going into my diagnosis I had never heard of diabetes. Nobody in my family had it. I was only 8 so this was all a mystery to me. I am now going on my 12th year with diabetes and know so much about it I think I could write a book. When I was 8, I never thought I would know as much as I do now, but I am very thankful for what I have learned and what diabetes has taught me.

1980 was the year Pac-Man and Post-it Notes were released,

and also the year I was diagnosed with diabetes. On Thanksgiving, my family - mom, dad, two brothers and a sister took the station wagon from Omaha, Nebraska to Denton, Nebraska to spend Thanksgiving with Aunt Mary, Uncle Colin and Grandma. As we all sat down to eat, I was so thirsty and couldn't quench my thirst; I must have had six glasses of water. The next day I was sick, and Mom took me to the children's doctor who diagnosed me with type 1 diabetes and sent me to the hospital. I distinctly remember watching my mom cry on the way in the car. I was scared and nervous and I hated needles. After a day in the ICU, I was moved to a regular hospital room and a nurse visited me with a doll, syringe, and a vial for me to practice giving injections. The next day she said, "Do you want to try it on yourself?", and I did. In the 1980s, needles were thicker and blood sugar was tested via urine with a small lab kit. Diabetes management has increasingly grown easier over time - 40 years and counting.



Brian Cripe

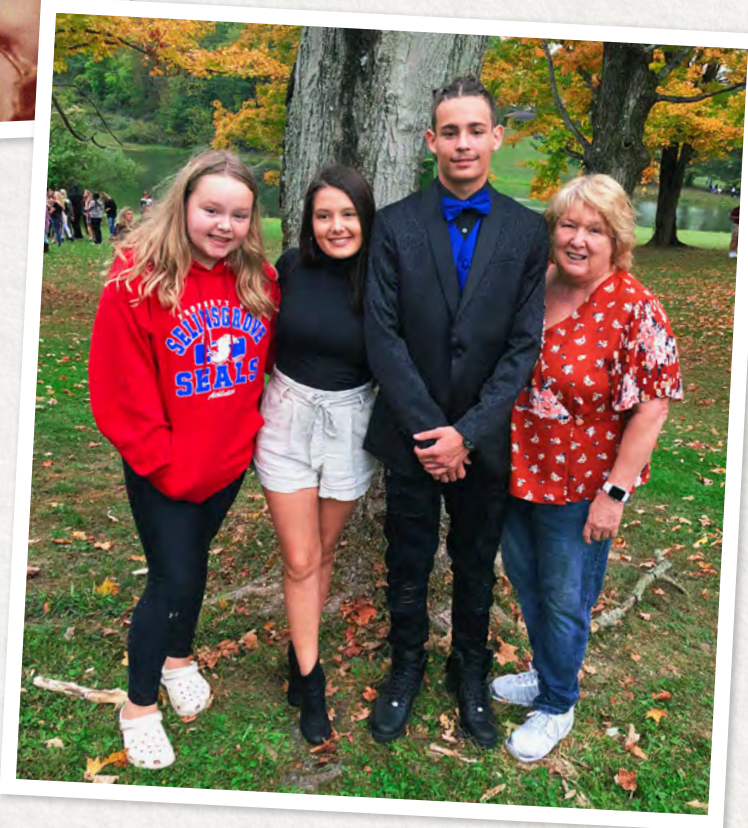
Diagnosed with diabetes in 1980





Doreen Bugai

Diagnosed with diabetes in 1980



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It was October 1980. I was 22 years old and a mom of two young children. I was at a PTO meeting when I started having issues with my eyes. Things were blurry and I was seeing black spots. After returning home it seemed my eyes were getting worse. Then suddenly, everything went dark - I could not see.

I was so scared. I had no idea what was happening. I was rushed to the hospital and was diagnosed with diabetes. My blood sugar was 1200. I had never heard the word diabetes before and had no idea what it was. I was admitted and prescribed oral medications, but they did not seem to be working. After a 2-week stay at the hospital I was introduced to insulin and a syringe. Words cannot tell you what I was feeling, I just knew I did not want to die or lose my eyesight permanently. It took many years for me to fully learn everything I needed to know about diabetes. I did some research and found that insulin was my lifeline. And so, my journey began.



It was February 13th, 2003. I was 25 years old and working as a nurse. I went from celebrating life to figuring out how to regain control of my life! As a nurse, I had textbook knowledge about diabetes in my head, but now I was going to have a relationship with diabetes that reached far beyond a classroom or clinic, and straight into my bloodstream and heart! A few weeks prior to my diagnosis I began experiencing classic symptoms of diabetes, but I was in denial! After lunch that particular day, my vision became blurry and I checked my blood sugar and saw a very high number. As I sat in the ER trying to process everything, I had every emotion imaginable: I was thankful to be alive but also sad, discouraged, angry, and worried about my future and how this would impact my family. My family was at my bedside when the doctor told me I was going to have to live the rest of my life with diabetes. I try to stay positive, so I looked at my wife and said, "Tomorrow is Valentine's Day and according to my blood sugar right now you're gonna have the sweetest husband in South Carolina!"

Eighteen years later, I still have diabetes but diabetes doesn't have me... and yes, my wife Tonya still has the sweetest husband in the state!



Drew Rainwater

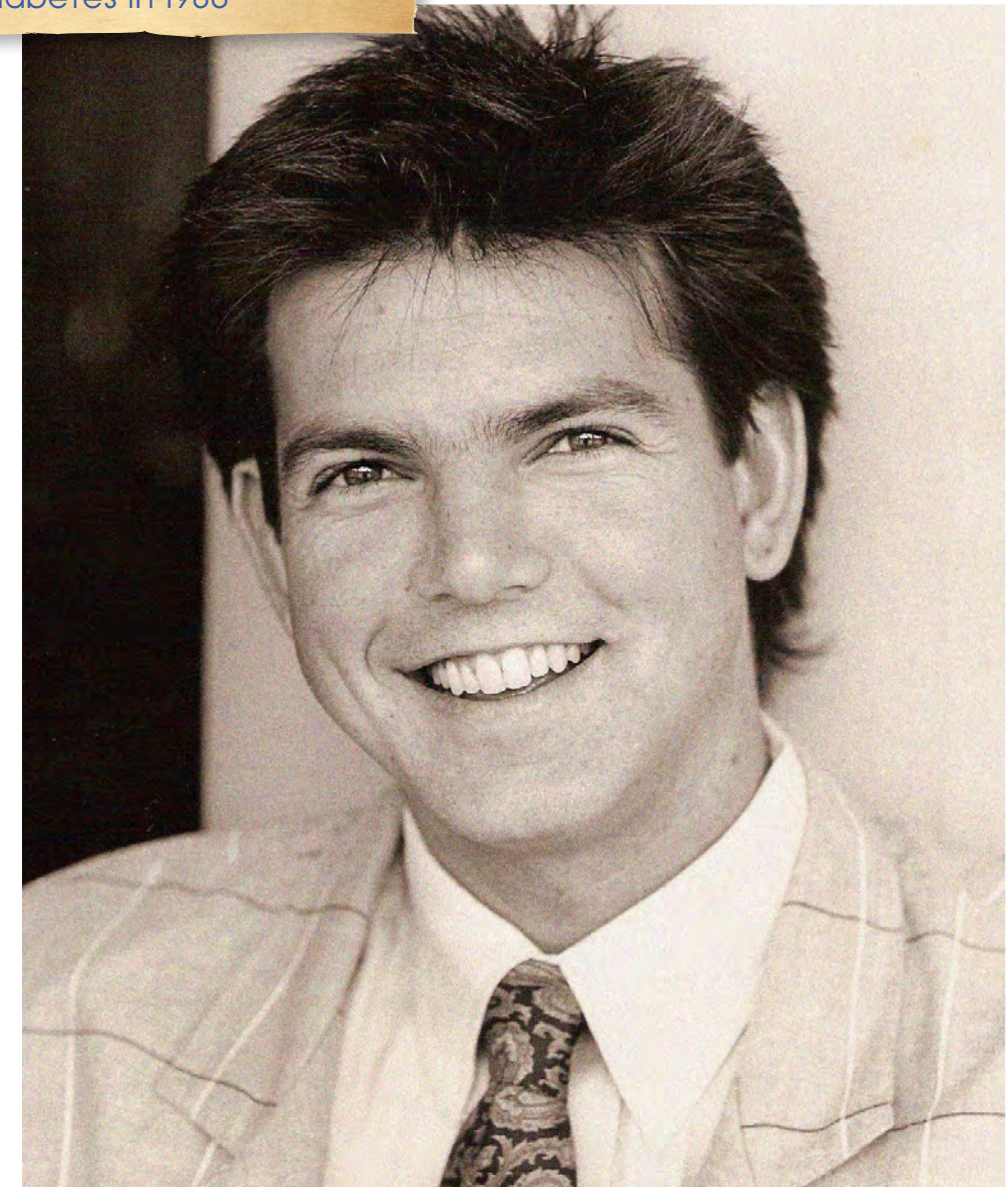
Diagnosed with diabetes in 2003

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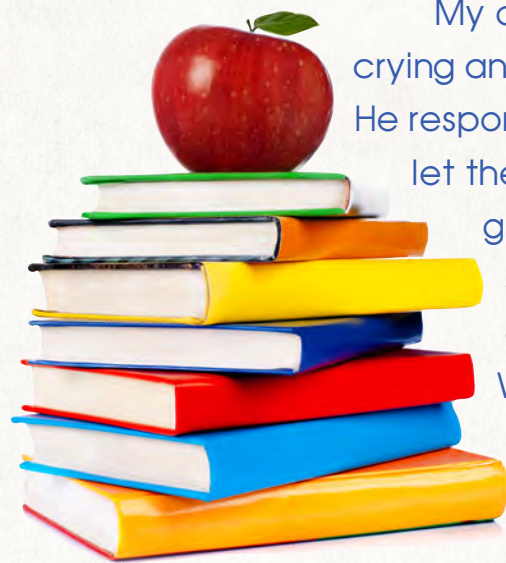
I was a skinny 16-year-old high school student. It was a Monday during semester finals that I started asking my teachers if I could leave the classroom to go to the bathroom. By Tuesday, this happened more frequently and was strange. By Wednesday, I became increasingly thirsty and was craving sweet drinks, which I never drank. I also noticed weight loss. My mom wanted to take me to the doctor's office on Thursday. I told her I had to finish my finals and would go Friday after school. Thursday night I was waking up every 45 minutes to go to the bathroom and my weight continued to drop. After school on Friday, I went to my best friend's house to play basketball while I waited for my mom to pick me up for the doctor visit. The doctor drew blood while I waited in the exam room for the results. It took over 2 hours. I thought I would be supplied with some pills to take and that I would be fine in a few days. The doctor appeared with my mom. She had a serious and somewhat defeated look on her face. He told me I had diabetes and that I would be going straight to the hospital. I did not know what diabetes was and I asked if I could go home first to change my clothes. He said no - my blood sugar was 983.

Ken Wagner

Diagnosed with diabetes in 1980



I was 62 years old and teaching in the New York City school system when I was diagnosed with type 1, which was also called juvenile diabetes then. My primary care physician diagnosed it during a routine yearly checkup. He reviewed my blood workup twice before he gave me the news. "I believe you have diabetes," he said. He gave me a little pill to take and suggested I see an endocrinologist. The endocrinologist agreed with the diagnosis and started me on insulin. He gave me a sample bottle, some syringes, and instructions on how to administer it. I was devastated! A needle in my stomach before each meal and bedtime? I hated needles!

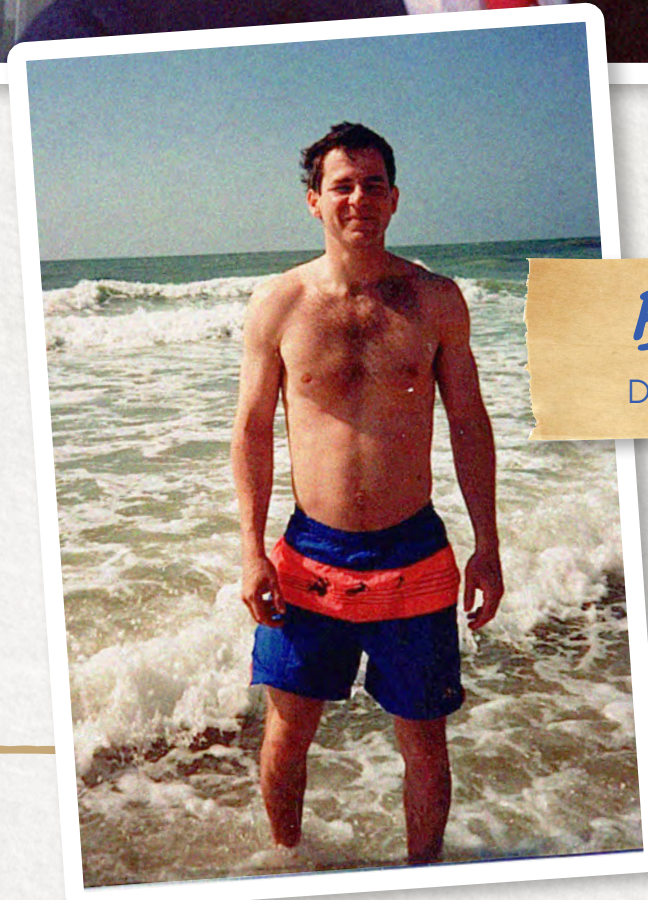


My oldest son called to say hello, and I was crying and feeling very depressed. I told him my tale. He responded, "Mom you have two choices: you can let the diabetes get you down and run you to the ground or you can rise to the challenge and succeed... Think of the bright side: Not everyone can be called a juvenile at 62." We both laughed. I succeeded and have successfully managed my diabetes. I am 84 years old and still laughing.

Beverly Lowenthal

Diagnosed with diabetes in 2004





Bob Fox

Diagnosed with diabetes in 1990

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May 7, 1990. I was 27. I was tired, thirsty and had frequent urination. The doctor asked me what I thought was wrong. My dad had type 1 diabetes, so I told him I thought it was diabetes or mono or something that made you pee and feel tired. The doctor said "Son, I think you have diabetes." He had smelled the ketones. He then checked my blood glucose with a meter and said, "Son, you have diabetes." I said, "That sucks." He said, "You're right son, it does suck, but you are going to become the expert in your own care and I will help you." He wanted to put me in the hospital for a few days but I said, "I will do everything you tell me to do. Can I not go into the hospital?" He agreed and said, "I'm going to give you a shot now and some prescriptions for insulin, a glucose monitor and supplies. You go eat a normal dinner - not too much and no sweets or lots of carbs, and be back here at 8 in the morning. Bring everything and be ready to give yourself a shot." I showed up the next morning and continued to do so each day for the next week. I was capable of handling things. But I was sad. The person I wanted to tell the most, my dad, had died two years earlier. But, as the doctor promised, I was on my way to becoming the expert in my care.



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