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The Mysteries of Teens: Transforming Challenges into Triumphs

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The Ultimate Goal
• As optimal glycemic control as feasible
• Optimal growth and development
• A socially, emotionally and psychologically healthy teen …
• And at the end of the day…
• An independent confident healthy young adult

Turn Challenges into Opportunities for Learning and Growth

Teen Friendly Center
• Team Approach
• Non judgmental attitude
• Make the Center accessible
• Utilize all resources
• Frequent visits
• Use technology
So many topics ... So little time

• Adolescence 101
  – Developmental considerations
• Teens strategies for change
  – Case study

Serious Issues
  • That require intervention
• The College Years

Adolescence

• Adolescence is marked by a multitude of complex changes:
  – Biological
  – Physical
  – Intellectual
  – Emotional

Adolescence and Diabetes

• Biological: the onset of hormonal activity deteriorates metabolic control despite significantly higher insulin doses.

• Physical: tremendous body changes make an adolescent acutely aware of his or her body image.

Adolescence and Diabetes

• Intellectual:
  – the adolescent is capable of learning the entire content of diabetes self-care.
  – Assuming responsibility of self-care is the challenge.

Adolescence and Diabetes

• Emotional Issues
  – Denial
  – Normal independence thwarted
  – Emergence of sexual relationships
  – Changes in Family Dynamics
  – Social activity increases
  – Risk taking

Adolescence and Diabetes

• Teens describe their situation as “hard”
• Teens view their condition as restraining
• Diabetes prevents “a normal life”
• Teens report periodic unstable times as being especially difficult
The Educator’s Challenge

• Recognize that learning diabetes content is easy - BUT
  – Assuming responsibility
  – Problem solving
  – Decision making
  – Balancing life stressors and diabetes
• DIFFICULT

Role of the Healthcare Team

• Trying to maximize adherence without considering the developmental issues is destined to fail

Case Study

Dillon B.
16 yr old diagnosed with Type 1 - 8 yrs ago on insulin pump therapy

Doing well until.............
Past three years
History of struggling with control
Difficulty with numerous absences
Minimal BG readings
Skipping boluses
Numerous ‘no show’ appointments

And the A1C is ......
13%

Considerations during the visit
Assess where the teen is currently at...
Where is the family?
What are the barriers to care?
What will give us the most ‘bang for your buck’
What is the teen willing to do?
What is the family willing to do?
How can we fit a successful regimen into their lifestyle?
What is Happening?

- Parents are divorcing
- Dillon started a private high school
- On download - bolusing only once or twice daily
- Infrequent BG in pump more in meter
- Dillon overwhelmed with his life

How do we assist Teens to implement necessary change?

What motivates one person to change...

May not work for another

Are they thinking they need change?

Do they want to but don’t know where to start?

Issues Discussed at Visit

Validate stress that family is under
Does he want to stay on the pump?
What are the School issues?
Teens and hormones - assess dosage
What are the barriers to care?
Where to begin?

What to Think About

What to Do
Insulin works!
Every day - Every dose

- Regular consistent exercise is key
- Healthy eating has a major impact

Small behavior changes...
Yield huge results

When the Situation Appears Overwhelming
Try to pick one thing that might yield big results… it can be a motivator

Simplify the regimen
Think outside the Box

Every visit try something different if not successful
Other ideas to consider ....

- Use a linking meter
- Alarms set for reminders to bolus
- How can our social worker assist?
- Would it help to meet other teens with diabetes?
- How can the parent assist?
- Emphasize that office visits are essential

As the next three years progressed

- Visits started being kept every 2-3 months
  - Seeing our social worker
  - Occasionally coming to Teen Event night
- Home schooled after 1 1/2 years
- Mother overseeing care
- A1C would decrease then increase
- One step forward two steps back

What other techniques did we utilize over time

- Download at every visit and comparison
- IPRO2
- Apps
- Humor
- Email friend from one of our older young adults
- Funding assistance with diabetes camp
- At least one positive thought every visit

Immediate response was ......

You guys never gave up on me – even when I gave up on myself

Past three visits over 8 month period

A1C
7.8% - 8%
Then we discussed what else occurred

- Family situation calmer
- Home schooled and doing well academically
- Taking 4-5 BG daily and it’s not an issue
- Bolusing more – for every bite!!!
- Playing basketball
- Eating well – less snacking

Dillon is growing up.. maturing

He is a work in progress

Tips for Parents of Teens

Praise the effort - Praise the positive
Show them the way to success
Appointments / Contact with the Team is important
Stay involved
Promote positive self esteem
How can I help?

Difficult Situations

Depression
Eating disorders
Sexual activity
Substance abuse

Depression

- Assessing for Depression
  - Eliminated physical causes
  - Assess teens ability to function in all aspects of life
    - School, works, athletics, friends, family
  - Perform annual screening

Eating Disorders

- Assess for signs
- Educate regarding risks
- Refer for therapy
**Sexual Activity**
- Discuss the risks
  - Pregnancy
  - STD’s
- Educate
  - Prevention
  - Effects on blood glucose levels

**Substance Abuse**
- Alcohol
  - Guidelines
  - Commonly consumed on college campus
  - Education is IMPERATIVE

**Substance Abuse**
- Cigarette smoking
- Marijuana Use
- Drug use

**Substance Abuse**
- Ask teen directly at every visit
  - Do you drink?
  - Have you experimented with drugs?
  - Do you smoke? How many cigarettes a day do you smoke?

**Substance Abuse**
- Intervention
  - Recognize when the adolescent needs help outside your scope of practice
    - Refer to appropriate specialists
    - Provide family with support

**Your Teen is Going to College**
Where do you begin?
**College Preparation Begins in High School**

- Transitioning from high school to college is a time of mixed emotions
- Teen has added responsibility to adding diabetes to the mix
- Excitement, Fear, Challenges

**Pediatric Diabetes Program**

- Foster a teen friendly center
- We are part of the process from beginning to end
- Start the conversation late in Junior year or early Senior year
- Education and planning continues at each visit through the start of the first semester

**Looking at Colleges**

- Health Center
- Emergency Facilities/Local Hospital
- Dorm Rooms
- Cafeteria/Food Sources/Meal Plans
- Transportation/Campus Set-up
- Local Pharmacy/Supplies

**Diabetes Control**

- Assess present regimen
  - Meter, Pump, Sensor, Insulin, Meal Plan
- Assess their management/control
  - Many college students report increased difficulty maintaining good control in college as compared to high school
  - Discuss where they are at and where they are going

**Main Points to Emphasize**

- Administer insulin as directed
- Check frequent blood glucose levels and assess them
- Consistent exercise
- Contact and follow-up with Diabetes Team

**What are the Barriers?**

- Peer Pressure
- Drugs/Alcohol
- Managing Finances
- School Workloads
What are the Barriers?

- Erratic Schedules
- New Foods and Eating Patterns
- Lack of Parental Involvement
- Fear of Hypoglycemia

Overcoming Barriers

- Open Discussion with Options for Effectively Dealing with Situations
- The More They Know, the Higher the Chance for Success

Once The College Is Picked

- Office Visit(s) With Teen and Parent(s)
- Letters for the Dean of Freshmen or Office of Disability
- Dorm Room Requests
- Yearly Blood Work and Eye Exam

Once The College Is Picked

- Plan for Supplies
- Insurance Coverage/Cards
- Join Gym
- Medic Alert Identification
- Important Contact Numbers/E-Mail

Parents Help Organize

- Insurance Coverage/Cards
- Local Pharmacy/Set-up Prescriptions
- Meal Plan
- Tuition Insurance
- Find Local Hospital/Endocrinologist
- Paperwork – Letters, Requests, Records
Success!!

• Giving Teens the Knowledge and Tools for Managing Diabetes at College Sets Them up for Success.