Type 1 Diabetes: What Does It Mean for My Child?

At first, caring for your child with type 1 diabetes can feel like a lot.

There are a lot of new things to learn, new ways to eat, and new tools and technology.

But it all adds up to making sure your child lives their best, happiest life.

And before you know it, all these new things will be just a normal part of your family routine.

If you think about it, almost everything new in your life has started that way— a little bit scary or awkward.

But with practice, most things become easier.

This is especially true for caring for a child with type 1 diabetes.

You'll do the things you need to do so often that they quickly become just things you naturally do.

And you won't be alone.

Your doctor and care team will teach you everything you need to know and what to watch for.

Some people find that having a team of friends, family, or online support helps.

Your doctor may know of support groups for people who care for children with type 1 diabetes.

One of the first things you'll learn is how to test your child's blood sugar.

And whether you test it with a finger stick or with a continuous glucose monitor, you'll soon get the hang of it.

The first time you do it may be scary, but if you're confident and relaxed, your child will be too.

And while your child may never like being poked, they will soon understand that it's quick—and important.

Now, type 1 diabetes must be treated with insulin.

You and your child will be taught how to use an insulin pen or pump or how to do insulin shots.

The insulin does the work your child's body no longer can do.

The amount of insulin your child needs depends on a lot of things, including what your child eats, how active they are, and their blood sugar levels.

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With time and experience, you'll have a better understanding of what to expect.

Another thing you'll learn about is counting carbohydrates.

It's another skill you'll add to the ways you'll be caring for your child.

Along with learning about insulin, blood sugar levels, and carb counting, you'll learn about other things—like basal insulin, which is slow-acting insulin.

And then there's bolus insulin, which is fast-acting.

As you hear new terms like these, ask questions, and let the doctors know when you don't understand something.

While the doctors may say these words many times every day, this may be your first time hearing them.

You'll also learn about treating high blood sugar and low blood sugar.

And you'll learn what to do if your child gets sick.

Something else you'll need to get used to is how unpredictable it can all feel.

Every day will be different.

What worked yesterday may not work today.

And that's okay.

Remember that what you're doing for your child now, your child will soon be able to do for themself.

Watching how you care for them now will help your child build confidence and develop skills that will last a lifetime.

Because with information, care, and time, you can help your child manage type 1 diabetes so they can live a long, healthy, happy life.

You know yourself and your child best, so if you have questions or concerns about managing diabetes, you can always call your doctor.