



## Winterize Your Diabetes

As you weatherproof your home, tune up the snowblower, and top off your antifreeze, don't forget to winterize yourself for good diabetes control this season.

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### From the Founder

dLife is pleased to present our second issue of dLifeConnect. We are getting bigger, better, and packed with more practical diabetes information, inspiration, and connection.

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information inspiration connection  
**Watch dLifeTV every Sunday evening on CNBC**

7:00PM Eastern 6:00PM Central 4:00PM Pacific [www.dLife.com](http://www.dLife.com)



## From the Founder

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It's always exciting to see a labor of love come together and have a real impact on real people. Thanks to you and our growing community of members, dLife has taken off. Your response to our TV show, web portal, and this newsletter has been nothing short of spectacular. Everyone at dLife thanks you for your support and welcomes your contributions and ideas.

We are also very excited to be awarded the LillyforLife™ Achievement Award in

Journalism for 2005, for dLife's contribution to the diabetes community. This award celebrates the inspiring accomplishments of people of all ages who live with diabetes or who contribute to the lives of those with diabetes. It also recognizes the necessity and power of compelling, motivating, and accessible diabetes information in achieving wellness.

We look forward to making dLife even better, and more useful to you, in 2006. We encourage you to take the next step and choose diabetes health over the

consequences of poor control. Remember, it's YOUR dLife. Only you can take control of your diabetes. You're worth it!"



Howard Steinberg  
CEO/Founder, dLife



## dLifeTip Dealing With Discrimination



If you've been dismissed from a job or passed over for a promotion due to diabetes, denied time for diabetes care at work, or have been told you weren't eligible for a position due to your diabetes, you may have legal recourse.

- **Know your rights.** The Americans with Disabilities Act and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 prevent employers from discriminating against qualified employees based on disability.
- **Talk to a lawyer.** Find an attorney who specializes in employment and/or disability law.
- **Be forthright.** In some cases, discrimination may be a case of an employer misunderstanding what diabetes is and how it's treated. Tell your employer what accommodations you need to do your job well, and why you need them.
- **Leave a paper trail.** Document instances of discrimination in the workplace in writing, and ask that the information be put in your personnel file.

Visit dLife at [www.dLife.com](http://www.dLife.com) for more information regarding unfair hiring practices and discrimination.

# Surviving Adolescence: A Parent's Guide

*The turbulent teen years can be difficult times for both parents and adolescents. Rites of passage like puberty, dating, driving, parties, and college allow a teen to develop his own sense of self and decision-making skills. When you throw a chronic, potentially life-threatening disease like diabetes into the equation, this move towards independence can be particularly scary for parents and caregivers.*



Diabetes may seem to present a parental paradox. How do you allow your child to take responsibility for her own diabetes care and experience the consequences of her decisions – good or bad – when the wrong choices could have serious repercussions for her health? The answer is to provide her with the skill sets and tools she needs to make good diabetes management choices, and to try to understand what she is dealing with.

Here are some ways to encourage positive self-care in your teen:

### **Promote a doctor-teen relationship**

Teens should be given one-on-one time with their care provider and other diabetes care team members to take charge of their treatment and to discuss issues they may not feel comfortable sharing with you. Stay out of the examining room, or drop them off at the office. That's not to say you shouldn't maintain a relationship with his physician and keep on top of his diabetes management if he isn't sharing. However, allowing him to take over some of the doctor/patient communication is an important transition towards adulthood.

### **Keep it honest**

Tell them you know how tough it can be, and encourage your child to be honest with you about his diabetes management. Keep your cool when he does and the news isn't good.

*Diagnosed at age 10, dLife Founder Howard Steinberg survived his adolescence in the shadow of diabetes:*

*"I desperately wanted to fit in, but in the back of my mind I was tremendously scared of a) the immediate consequences of my actions, such as severe low blood sugars, b) embarrassment that my condition set me apart, and c) the scary complications I was told about, like blindness."*

### **Don't punish**

Promise no consequences except understanding. If he knows you will react in a non-judgmental way, he's

more likely to listen to your response and you can discuss strategies for improvement.

### **Show no fear**

Showing fear will add a level of complexity and anxiety for your teen. They may be less than truthful about their diabetes management if they feel that sharing problems may hurt you and cause you stress.

### **Discuss drinking and drugs**

Make sure your teenager understands what kind of impact alcohol and drugs can have on their diabetes control. Let them know that while you don't condone the behavior, you want them to take the proper precautions should they decide to drink.

### **Seek out support**

If your son or daughter has an interest, seek out support groups and camps catering to teens with diabetes. By developing friendships with other teenagers who share the same challenges and concerns, your child will develop a stronger support network.



## dLife Money Matters: Flexible Spending Accounts

*Diabetes management requires a steady stream of medical supplies, and you may find that your insurance doesn't cover everything you need to stay in tight control. To combat this problem, consider signing up for a Flexible Spending Account (FSA) through your employer.*

An FSA account is an employer-sponsored benefit that allows the employee to save pre-tax dollars – usually about \$5,000 – for expenses not covered or covered only in part by insurance. The money is taken out through equal payroll deductions before State, Federal, and Social Security taxes are withheld. This reduces your taxable income – possibly lowering your tax bracket – and may reduce your total tax bill. Although plans will vary by employer, the open enrollment period to sign up for this benefit is typically during the last quarter of the year. Contact your human resources department for details.

### Medical FSAs

There are two types of FSA accounts: medical and dependent care. Dependent care FSAs are used for childcare expenses such as daycare, while medical accounts are used to cover your uninsured or underinsured healthcare expenses. For the medical account, the IRS allows your employer to determine the benefit cap, or maximum amount you can save.

One of the perks of the medical account is that the money is made fully available from the beginning. Should an emergency arise, you can pay the bill and get your money back – up to the elected amount, of course. Some employers may even offer a debit card for this account.

In order to be reimbursed, you must submit a receipt for a qualified medical expense, which includes but is not limited to:

- Blood glucose meters and test strips
- Prescription/over-the-counter medications
- Doctor visits/co-payments
- Eyeglasses

### Use It or Lose It

Electing to have an FSA account is not a decision to make lightly. This is a use-it-or-lose-it account so you should choose an amount you know you will spend in a year. Also, dependent care and medical accounts are separate entities. You cannot transfer excess funding from one to the other. Once you enroll, you cannot make a change unless you have a major life event – marriage, divorce, adoption, birth, death, or the loss of your spouse's insurance.

Currently, you are reimbursed for medical expenses incurred within one calendar year. There is a three-month grace period to submit receipts to receive reimbursement, but if you have money left in your account after that, you forfeit it. However, beginning in 2006, you may incur expenses for an additional two and a half months and still be reimbursed, up to March 15 of the following year. After that date, you forfeit anything you do not claim.

Remember, this is not free money. These are your pre-tax dollars. But if your medical costs are beyond what your insurance will bear, an FSA account can prove to be a useful tool in managing your diabetes.

*Go to [dLife.com](http://dLife.com) for more about diabetes, FSAs, and other financial resources.*



## The Uninvited Guest

By Janis Roszler

*Those we love don't always react to our diabetes the way that we hope they will. Some rise to the occasion and others fall short.*



For the first time in eight years of marriage, Nancy was speechless. That morning, her husband had begged her to stop losing weight. At 5'3" and 240 pounds, Nancy always wanted to be thinner, but it took a recent diagnosis of type 2 diabetes to motivate her to succeed. She was already down 17 pounds and felt energized, happy, and motivated. The rest of her family cheered her on. How could her husband make such a request? Why couldn't he be proud of her like everyone else?

Mike was scared. He wanted his wife to be healthy, but couldn't handle the changes that he saw in her. She was getting thinner, which was a good thing, but she was also becoming much more assertive and wouldn't talk about anything other than diabetes. On top of that, the more that everyone praised and encouraged the "new and improved Nancy," the more uncomfortable he became. The entire thing was getting to him. He couldn't handle it any longer. This new Nancy was overwhelming. He missed the meek, cuddly Nancy who put his needs first...always. Their relationship was now stressed and he was not pleased.

Fortunately, Mike shared his concerns with Nancy and they decided to explore ways to improve the situation. They tried the following:

- They set a weekly "date night." Many experts recommend that couples schedule a regular time to connect with each other. It helps keep the excitement and fun in the relationship. There would be no talk of meal plans, exercise, or blood sugar results. Instead, they discussed a variety of different topics and had a terrific time. Their recent outing boosted Mike's confidence in their relationship significantly.
- They discussed ways to support each other. Their marriage had been a traditional one with Nancy as the main caretaker of Mike's needs. Now she needed him, which was a foreign role for him. Instead of making vague requests, such as asking him to "be there for her," Nancy began to clearly state what she wanted from Mike. That afternoon, she asked him to keep the children busy for 25 minutes so she could complete her treadmill workout. Mike happily obliged.
- Nancy agreed to find additional support options. Nancy still shares diabetes concerns with Mike, but found others to connect with also. She now attends a diabetes support group at her local hospital and interacts with participants on an Internet diabetes message board. Her talks with Mike about diabetes continue to be meaningful and her new friendships offer her a great outlet for even more discussion.

Those we love don't always react to our diabetes the way that we hope they will. Some rise to the occasion and surpass our expectations, and others fall short. If your needs are not met, open up the discussion and see what changes can be made. Seek additional support, if available. Diabetes is an unwelcome guest in any relationship. Help your loved ones learn to live with the change.

*Go to [dLife.com](http://dLife.com) for more suggestions for managing relationships and diabetes.*



## New Year, New You

Diabetes resolutions you  
can actually keep



It's a brand new year and the opportunity for a fresh start. Perhaps you've already promised yourself that you'll maintain perfect blood sugars, purge "dessert" from your vocabulary, and get to the gym each morning at daybreak. But the harsh reality is that almost half of all resolutions are broken (or at least bent) before the year is half through.

This year, try making some simple resolutions towards better diabetes management that you can actually stick to. Here are seven ways you can improve your control and feel better about your diabetes and your life in 2006.

### This Year I Resolve To...

**Set realistic goals.** Don't make promises to yourself that you know you can't, or won't, keep. Resolving to work out two hours a day is a noble goal, but committing to 30 minutes a day most days of the week may be more practical if you're just getting started with an exercise plan. Remember – small steps will still get you to the finish line.

**Make, and keep, my diabetes appointments.** Pull out your calendar

today and set up your regular diabetes care appointments and your associated screening appointments for the year. It's easy to overlook that annual dilated eye exam or the visit to the podiatrist. Schedule everything today and procrastination won't get the better of you.

**Share my diabetes with someone close.** Don't try to shoulder the burden alone. Everyone needs emotional support, so talk to your loved ones about how tough diabetes control can be, and educate them on your diabetes needs and how they can help you stay healthy. If family or friends aren't supportive of your efforts to improve your health, then seek solace from a support group.

**See a registered dietitian.** If you've never met with an RD, or haven't seen one since diagnosis, make an appointment today. Menu planning can be a whole lot easier with the guidance of a professional. Find someone you like that has experience in diabetes consultations and can also work with you on any other dietary restrictions you face (e.g., vegetarianism, celiac

disease). Don't be afraid to call and prescreen candidates.

**Learn something new about my diabetes.** Treatments and technologies are changing constantly. Stay up to date by subscribing to a diabetes magazine or newsletter, visiting diabetes websites, or getting involved in the diabetes community. And talk to your doctor about what you learn and how it may apply to improving your control. Remember, you are the head of your diabetes care team, and without your input and motivation, your doctor can't help you reach your goals.

**Test more often.** Commit to testing just one more time a day than you currently are to help you get a better handle on your blood glucose levels. And if you're still using a bulky or slow meter that may be discouraging you from testing as often as you should, trade it in for an upgrade. Your doctor or CDE may have meter samples or rebate offers he can pass along – just ask.

**Take time for myself.** This should be an easy resolution to keep, but it isn't for many.

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## Chunky Chicken and Vegetable Soup

Serves 4

Warm up a cold winter day with this low-carb, hearty soup.

### Ingredients:

- 1 tablespoon canola oil
- 1 boneless skinless chicken breast (4 ounces), diced
- 1/2 cup chopped green bell pepper
- 1/2 cup thinly sliced celery
- 2 green onions, sliced
- 2 cans (14 1/2 ounces each) chicken broth
- 1 cup water
- 1/2 cup sliced carrots
- 2 tablespoons cream
- 1 tablespoon finely chopped fresh parsley
- 1/4 teaspoon dried thyme leaves
- 1/8 teaspoon black pepper

### Instructions:

Heat oil in large saucepan over medium heat. Add chicken; cook and stir 4 to 5 minutes or until no longer pink. Add bell pepper, celery and onions. Cook and stir 7 minutes or until vegetables are tender.

Add broth, water, carrots, cream, parsley, thyme and black pepper. Simmer 10 minutes or until carrots are tender.

### Nutritional Information:

Calories 130, Total Fat 8g, Protein 9g,  
Carbohydrate 5g, Cholesterol 27mg, Sodium 895mg  
Dietary Fiber 1g, Saturated Fat 3g

### Dietary Exchanges:

1 Lean Meat, 1 Vegetable, 1 Fat

Source: Diabetic Cooking Magazine

For more delicious, diabetes-friendly recipes, visit the dLife Recipe Box at [dLife.com](http://dLife.com).

## dLifeTip Traveling With Diabetes

If you're hitting the road, air, or sea with diabetes, take precautions to ensure your trip is both safe and enjoyable.

- **Don't stress.** Stress can cause blood sugar levels to rise, so remember the "R & R" component of vacationing and don't overplan.
- **BYOS.** Bring your own snacks, even if you anticipate eating in flight or stopping for a meal. You never know when delays could send blood sugar plummeting.
- **Double up.** Bring twice as much medication, insulin, and supplies as you think you'll need, particularly if you're traveling abroad.
- **Carry on.** Always carry your medical supplies on board with you rather than checking them in luggage.
- **Get a doctor's note.** If you're flying with medical sharps (i.e., lancets, syringes) or a pump, it's a good idea to have both the original prescription labels for the insulin and a note from your doctor explaining your medical need.
- **Stay cool.** If you're traveling in hot climates, get a cooling or insulated bag for insulin and keep supplies out of direct sunlight.

Visit dLife at [www.dLife.com](http://www.dLife.com) for more information about traveling with diabetes.



## Winterize Your Diabetes

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**Keep toes toasty.** Diabetes-related circulation and nerve problems can mean icy cold feet for many. Don't use hot water bottles or heating pads to stay warm in bed if you have neuropathy. Buy several pairs of loose, seamless socks to keep your feet snug in bed.

**Defeat dry eye.** Forced air heating systems and the dry cold air outside can make your eyes feel as if it's summer in the Sahara. Invest in a humidifier to increase the moisture content of the air and use artificial tear drops to keep eyes moist and comfortable.

**Save your skin.** Dry skin is a common bane of winter weather. Apply a good, alcohol-free moisturizing lotion liberally after bathing to keep skin moist. It will also help you avoid the drying and cracking that is an open invitation to infection in people with diabetes.

**Stay hydrated.** Beyond drying out your eyes and skin, cold air can also dehydrate your body if you're out skiing or enjoying other outdoor activities, and dehydration can raise blood glucose levels. Drink plenty of fluids when enjoying winter exercise.

**Ward off winter weight gain.** Between holiday treats and inclement weather that cuts into your exercise routine, winter can mean an extra 5-10 lbs for many. Stay active by planning alternative exercise options now. When those frigid January winds are whipping down your street, you'll be glad you signed up for that yoga class or indoor tennis club.

**Bundle up.** Beyond dressing yourself adequately for the cold weather, you should also make sure your blood glucose meter and other diabetes supplies are protected from the elements. Extreme weather conditions can affect the performance of your meter, so if you're spending much time in the cold and snow, purchase an insulated pack or fanny bag to keep your meter warmed up and accessible.

**Test, don't guess.** Dramatic changes in temperature can mean a change in blood glucose trends. As the season changes, test often and talk to your doctor about adjusting your treatment routine accordingly to keep your diabetes in good control.

*For more tips and information on managing your diabetes in every season, visit [dLife.com](http://dLife.com).*

## New Year, New You

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Long hours at the office, errands to run after hours, kids to shuttle around – there's often not enough time left for sleeping and eating, much less taking some personal down time. Remember that stress can raise blood glucose levels, so "R & R" is more than self-indulgence, it's a medical necessity. Carve out a few hours each week for treating yourself to a book, a walk, or even a nap.

*For more help in managing your diabetes in the new year, visit [www.dLife.com](http://www.dLife.com).*

## dLifeTip

It's never too early to start thinking about summer camp. Part of the process in making your camp selection is interviewing the director and/or staff. Here are some questions to ask before making your decision:

- What is the camp philosophy?
- What is the age and background of the camping staff and how are they trained?
- What is the percentage of staff members who return each year?
- What medical facilities does the camp use?
- What is the policy on phone calls and family visits?
- Will they provide references from former campers?
- How are emergencies handled?
- What is the food like?
- What is a typical day like?

Find more camp information at [www.dlife.com/campdirectory](http://www.dlife.com/campdirectory), brought to you in partnership with the Diabetes Camping Association.

