Miss Birmingham raises diabetes awareness

by Emily Renee Hall, RN, MSN, CDE

Medical identification is critical when a person with diabetes experiences an urgent situation. A noticeable bracelet, necklace, shoe tag, car sticker, information card or dog tag can assist others in providing prompt but appropriate care when needed.

Although medical-alert identifications can be found at most pharmacies and medical supply stores, Briana Kinsey, Miss Birmingham 2012, presented silicon medical-alert bracelets to the Endocrinology staff in April 2012. James Woodward, RN, accepted the donation on behalf of children with diabetes at Children’s of Alabama.

Briana, a native of Hoover, is a sophomore at the University of Alabama in Tuscaloosa. Her major is Biology/Pre-medicine and her goal is to become a pediatrician. Shadowing Endocrinology Division Director Kenneth McCormick, MD, in his clinics at Children’s exposed Briana to valuable learning experiences on how diabetes affects children.

Because of her family history of Type 2 diabetes, Briana hopes to raise awareness by working with her platform “Daring to Defeat Diabetes.” This focus enables Briana to reach out and educate Alabamians of all ages on the risk factors for diabetes.

Already, Briana has helped raise awareness via: (1) An annual fundraiser, "Dance AWAY Diabetes,” where she has educated at least 125 teens on the importance of exercise; (2) Formation of a team for Step-Out Walks and Tour de Cure events; (3) A fundraiser for the Children’s Miracle Network and (4) Volunteering at Camp Sugar Falls.

Recently, Briana received the crown as Miss Hoover 2013. She is planning a Sugar Free Fashion Show Fundraiser in February 2013. The funds raised during this event will benefit children attending camp at Southeastern Diabetes Education Service. Additionally, Briana is eager to assist with the promotion of Children’s of Alabama diabetes tag “Hope for Kids with Diabetes.” Briana is pictured above with 12-year-old Briley Teague of Helena, who has Type 1 diabetes.

Helping children with hormone-related disorders

About 35 percent of our patients are referred for either Type 1 diabetes or Type 2 diabetes. Diabetes affects approximately 1 in 400-500 children and, alarmingly, the incidence is increasing worldwide. There is no cure, and treatment typically requires 4 insulin shots per day along with 4-6 finger sticks to measure blood glucose. Management also includes strict adherence to a diabetes-tailored diet and a healthy exercise lifestyle. If the blood sugar is poorly regulated, this chronic disorder can lead to several dreaded and irreversible complications involving the nervous system, eyes, kidney, heart and peripheral circulation.

The management of childhood diabetes requires a highly skilled comprehensive multispecialty team consisting of pediatric endocrinologists, diabetes educators, insulin pump specialists, dieticians, social workers and research nurses. Other areas diagnosed, followed and treated by our team include, but are not limited to: adrenal gland disorders, bone and calcium disorders, growth disorders, pituitary gland disorders, hypoglycemia, puberty disorders, thyroid disease and genetic disorders. Our Division services include a broad range of clinical, research and training programs.

Meet our endocrine pediatric subspecialty physicians and our nurse practitioners.

Front, center: Division Director Kenneth McCormick, MD. Second row, from left: Joy Atchison, MD; Bragan Petrey, CRNP; Michelle Smith, CRNP; Ambika Ashraf, MD; and Hussein Abdullatif, MD. Third row, from left: Caroline Colvin, MD; Allison Lunsford, MD; Lauren Quinn, CRNP; Leslie Pitts, CRNP; Ava Mitchell, CRNP; Gail Mick, MD; and Mary Lauren Scott, MD. Back row, Michael Stalvey, MD. Not pictured: Linnea Larson-Williams, MD.
Diabetes Specialty Car Tag Receives Approval

Children's is happy to report approval for a specific Alabama License Plate (tag) to help raise funds, awareness and hope for kids with diabetes.

The Hope for Kids with Diabetes specialty tag application and design was approved by the Alabama Department of Revenue Motor Vehicle Division/Registration Section. Now, 1,000 pre-commitments are necessary for the car tag to go into mass production.

The Hope for Kids with Diabetes specialty car tag is $50.00, with $41.25 from every purchase of the car tag directly benefiting Pediatric Endocrinology at Children's of Alabama.

Funds for the specialty license tag program will be dedicated to pediatric diabetes patient care, physician training and research to benefit the thousands of young Alabamians growing up with this disease. For more information, visit www.ChildrensAL.org/hopeforkids.

News You Can Use

Visit us on the web

The Endocrine Clinic's official website is now available, providing valuable information on such topics as:
- General information on clinic hours and procedures
- Directions
- Sick day guidelines
- Call center information
- Pre-diabetes, Type 1 diabetes and Type 2 diabetes
- Newborn screening
- Current research projects

In addition, you can download up-to-date school packet forms and check out other useful links.

Our Division services include a broad range of clinical, research and fellowship programs. Each of our physicians, fellows, nurse practitioners, educators, nurses and support staff is profiled on our website.

To access our website, visit the main Children's of Alabama website at www.ChildrensAL.org. Then go to Featured Services and Endocrinology. Or you may go directly to https://www.ChildrensAL.org/endocrinology.

School and your rights

The Americans with Disabilities Act (504) states that no qualified individual shall be excluded from participating in any programs or activities of a public entity.

This means children must be given equal opportunity to participate at school and cannot be excluded from equal access to academic programs or school sponsored extra-curricular activities.

An amendment to the law in 2009 specifically included the endocrine system for children needing medicine, medical supplies or medical equipment at school whether it is insulin, glucagon, hydrocortisone, solu-cortef, etc.

A school nurse should be assigned to go on school sponsored trips to handle any emergency that might arise.

There's an app for that!

If labels are not always available when you are out to eat, what’s the next best thing? Apps for your phone! Here is a list of diabetes-related apps that can help with more than just nutrition information and carbohydrate counting. The following apps have been reviewed by a Registered Dietitian and can be found at online app stores at a cost of NOTHING! Happy App Shopping!

Whitney Hlubik
MPH, RD, LD

Diabetes App Reviews

http://www.eatright.org/Media/content.aspx?id=6442467022
Marisa Hoffman, MBA, RD, LD, reviews the 10 top-rated free iPhone apps for managing diabetes and provides a Registered Dietitian rating.

Bant
Designed to easily capture blood glucose readings and supply trend data for up to 90 days.

Blood Sugar Tracker
Allows user to easily log blood sugar levels, set target blood glucose ranges, and view history and simple graphs to quickly identify numbers that are out of range.

Carb Master Free
Tracks carbohydrate intake plus total calories, fat, sugar, protein and fiber for the day. This app targets people with diabetes or those on a low-carb diet.

Diabetes Buddy Lite
Tracks factors that influence blood glucose levels: daily carb intake, glucose measures, medication, food and water intake.

Diabetes Companion
Includes complete nutrition facts for common foods, tons of recipes, informative videos, Q&A for common diabetes related issues and blood glucose tracking tools.

Diabetes Log
Allows user to easily track glucose readings, carbohydrate intake and insulin dosage by date.

GluCoMo
Allows user to track blood sugar levels, insulin intake and other health components like blood pressure and weight, activity and pulse.

Glucose Buddy
Users can manually enter blood glucose numbers, carbohydrate intake, insulin dosage and activities.

Vree for Diabetes
Includes blood glucose tracking, nutrition tracking, activity tracking, medication tracking, progress charts and blood pressure tracking.

WaveSense Diabetes Manager
Tracks blood glucose results, carb intake and insulin doses. Features include a logbook, trend chart, email reports, color-coded results, video content and customizable target ranges for hypo-/hyperglycemia limits and mealtime schedules.

Research

"Every great advance in science has issued from a new audacity of the imagination."
-John Dewey

Pediatric Endocrinology serves as a site for clinical research activities. Through our Office of Clinical Research, we are pleased to offer research in the areas of diabetes and endocrine disorders, as well as research opportunities for family members of Type 1 diabetes. Our physicians and health care team take part in research to expand scientific knowledge and advance health care, while taking diligent measures to protect volunteer patients.

We would like to encourage you to contact our research department to learn more about current opportunities. Please contact Jenni Scholl at 205.996.2134 or jscholl@peds.uab.edu to learn more.

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There's an app for that!

Diabetes impacts all aspects of a person’s life. It can feel overwhelming and often be difficult to deal with. When this occurs, it is important to have coping skills that assist with maintaining a healthy body and mind.

1. Talk to someone. This may be a parent, family member, friend or someone else who is living with diabetes. Your support system can be there to listen and be a sounding board for your thoughts and feelings.

2. Journal. Some thoughts are difficult to share with others. Having a journal to record thoughts, feelings and plans can be a good alternative. By writing things down you can experience an emotional release and give your mind a break. This also allows you to go back later and examine your journey – what was going on and ways to handle challenges in the future.

3. Music. Listening to music is a great way to relax. Music often speaks to the emotions we are feeling at the time. Find music you identify with and try to determine exactly why you identify with it.

4. Exercise. Whether it be walking, swimming or playing outside with friends – all of these are great ways to release frustration and improve your health. Any activity that gets you moving can be helpful. Engaging in physical activity causes the body to release endorphins, the body’s natural feel good chemicals that directly positively impact our mood and outlook on life.

5. Activities with other diabetics. Find others in your area that are living with diabetes. They have firsthand knowledge of what you are going through and can act as a resource for additional ideas on of how to cope. You may know someone at school or in your church. It is also possible to meet people through local activities and support groups. Southeastern Diabetes Education provides individual and family camps as well as other opportunities to participate in activities throughout the state.

6. Establish a routine. When you have a routine, stress decreases. Any reduction in stress level is a benefit when living with a chronic illness. Examples may include having your supplies in a specific location or checking your blood sugar at the same time daily when possible.

7. Break things down into smaller steps. Sometimes you may become overwhelmed with all you have to do. By breaking it down into one or two steps at a time you can decrease stress and anxiety. This will allow you to be more focused and accomplish tasks more easily.

8. Focus on what you can control. Feeling out of control is frustrating. By focusing on those things you can control (such as checking your blood sugar regularly and making good food choices) you can decrease feelings of anger, frustration and anxiety.

9. Reward yourself. When you accomplish a goal, make sure you take time to give yourself a pat on the back. Include parents, friends and other supportive people in celebrating this accomplishment. For example, if you checked your blood sugar regularly then you might ask if you can pick the meal for the weekend or have a friend over. If you kept up with your meter for a length of time, then being rewarded with a special carrier would be appropriate.

10. Talk to a counselor or therapist. Sometimes the emotional impact of an illness is more than a person or family can handle alone. Counselors and therapists can be there to help you process these difficult issues. Free services are available through Children’s Harbor Family Center at Children’s of Alabama by calling 205.638.6123. Additional services are available throughout the state through insurance providers and community mental health agencies.

Mary Lauren Scott, MD,

joined our department this year as a new assistant professor of Pediatric Endocrinology. A native of Baton Rouge, LA, she attended medical school at Louisiana State University in New Orleans and completed a combined internal medicine and pediatric residency here at UAB. She completed her fellowship training in Pediatric Endocrinology at UAB this summer and has made the transition to full time clinical faculty.

Dr. Scott is working as a general pediatric endocrinologist but has a special interest in Type 1 diabetes, Type 2 diabetes, obesity and weight loss. She recently started a new Type 2 diabetes clinic to help better educate new patients about their disease, risk factors and goals of treatment.

Keeping children with diabetes (both Type 1 and Type 2) active is an important part of helping to control their diabetes and to prepare them for a healthier future. She enjoys working with athletes with diabetes to support them in pursuing their goals while working to control their blood sugars.

Her goal in treating her patients is to help to support them in growing up with their diagnosis whether it is diabetes, thyroid, pituitary or adrenal disorders to become informed adults capable of living with their diagnosis and not suffering from it. Dr. Scott, who serves as medical advisor for this newsletter, is pictured above with 4-year-old Caleb Brooks of Marion, who has Type 1 diabetes.