Let’s talk about our Kidneys

The diagnosis of Type 1 diabetes in your child can be overwhelming at first. Suddenly, you and your child—depending on his or her age—must learn how to give injections, count carbohydrates, and monitor blood sugar. Type 1 diabetes in children requires consistent care. No doubt about it, diabetes is a very demanding condition. And often with Type 1, other conditions or complications can crop up over time. In this issue, we’ll focus on one common complication: kidney disease.

Kidney Health and Diabetes

The kidneys serve multiple crucial functions in our bodies. They help maintain optimal blood pressure and produce several vital hormones, but their primary purpose is to filter out waste products in your blood and other body fluids. Our kidneys do this through a network of tiny blood vessels. The process creates urine and allows the body to reabsorb glucose.

Over time, high blood glucose can slowly damage the tiny blood vessels, affecting the rate at which filtered fluids move through the kidneys. Kidney disease, also referred to as “renal disease,” occurs when the kidneys are unable to properly filter all the fluids that pass through them. Chronic kidney disease is a common complication for both Type 1 and Type 2 diabetes.

What Can You Do?

Maintaining good glucose control can prevent or slow damage to the kidneys. Other lifestyle factors can also help prevent kidney disease: exercising and being physically active, eating healthy foods, and cutting back on salty foods. Here are some things you can do now to prevent or delay kidney disease:

- Help your child to develop healthy eating habits that will last a lifetime. Eating a diet every day that includes a lot of fruits and vegetables is an excellent start. Most fruits and veggies are lower in carbohydrates than other snacks, and contain vitamins and healthy fiber.
- Assist your child, whenever possible, to learn how to keep their blood glucose in “target range.” Teach them realistic glucose control for their age, developmental stage, and activity level. This is an important skill, and will have a positive effect on their long-term health. Sometimes, it’s not an easy task. But remember, you have a healthcare provider and team who can help in making a plan and have many ideas for living well with Type 1 diabetes. You don’t have to do it alone!

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• Check in with your child’s healthcare provider about regular kidney health screening. Most providers test once per year. Screening is usually done through a blood test that measures the rate filtered fluids move through the kidneys. The test gives a snapshot of kidney health.

Just as with regular eye exams and A1C testing, this is another important tool to help maintain your child’s health.

Understanding what to watch for can help your child avoid chronic kidney disease and live well with Type 1 diabetes.

Plan Now for Summer Camp!

When you think of the warm, sunny days of summer, does it include fond memories of attending summer camp as a kid? Do the memories include activities such as horseback riding, swimming, canoeing, and campfires? Kids with diabetes enjoy these experiences too!

Whether you are the parent of a newly diagnosed child or have years of experience, consider camp. Diabetes camps are designed especially for children with diabetes and provide a camping experience in a safe environment. They give kids a chance to meet other children with diabetes and share their experiences, while learning to be more personally responsible for their diabetes management. Not all camps have the same activities or sports, and some camps may offer scholarships. But one thing is certain, diabetes camps are a lot of fun.

Diabetes Camps

Check out the American Diabetes Association site for a camp near you:


Oregon
- chrisdudley.org/?q=camps-for-diabetes
- galescreekcamp.org

Idaho
- hodia.org
- hdiabetescenter.com/category/diabetes-camps

Montana

Washington
- childrenwithdiabetes.com/camps/d_07_1wa.htm
Even with Diabetes, this Guy Really Cooks!

Have you thought about what you might want to do as a career? Here is a profile of an interesting guy who found out he was a Type 1 diabetic while in culinary school. That news changed his life as a chef in a very positive way. Chris Smith is the author of *The Diabetic Chef’s Year-Round Cookbook* and *Cooking with the Diabetic Chef*, both published by the American Diabetes Association.

**How did he become the “Diabetic Chef”?**

Chris was 27 years old and in cooking school when he was diagnosed with Type 1 diabetes. He was going to the prestigious Culinary Institute of America in Hyde Park, New York ([ciachef.edu/newyork](http://ciachef.edu/newyork)) when he got very sick and lost 30 pounds. The doctor’s diagnosis of diabetes was a shock. Chris was worried he couldn’t finish culinary school and be a chef, working in the kitchen with food all day, every day. And he wasn’t sure he could handle diabetes if it meant never again eating the foods he enjoyed or eating a regular meal with his family. But, as he learned about taking care of himself and how important of a role eating good food plays in diabetes, he decided to make it his personal mission to educate diabetics and their families about food and a healthy lifestyle.

**Great food to the rescue**

Chef Chris used the techniques he learned for preparing great restaurant foods to create flavorful recipes for people living with diabetes. He wrote two books about preparing food that is good for you and tastes great. In his first book, Chris covered basic meal planning and preparing really great tasting foods at home. In his second book, he included easy-to-prepare recipes, designed for the whole family.

**This celebrity chef really cooks**

Now, Chris has more than 20 years of experience and is the executive chef for Wake Forest University Baptist Medical Center. (The hospital must have some of the best food in the world if he is their chef!) He also appears on national and local television and radio, writes for *Diabetic Living* magazine, and does a series of cooking classes and workshops to help people living with diabetes learn to cook. You can learn more about this amazing man at his website: [thediabeticchef.com](http://thediabeticchef.com).

**What’s your passion?**

Chris is passionate about food, which works great for him...and for us! He is now all about helping others learn to cook healthy meals full of flavor! He proves it’s possible to be whatever you want to be and be a Type 1 diabetic. Of course, it helps to feel passionate about whatever you choose to do in life. What are your interests? Is there one you are especially passionate about? Like Chris, imagine the possibilities.
**Strawberry “Grahamwiches”**

Makes two grahamwiches (1 serving)

**You will need:**
- 5 Strawberries
- 2 Graham crackers
- 2 Tablespoons low-fat cream cheese

**Instructions:**
1. Slice strawberries
2. Break graham crackers in half so you have four squares
3. Spread cream cheese on two graham cracker squares
4. Place sliced strawberries in on top of the cream cheese
5. Place the remaining graham cracker squares on top

Eat right away. Delicious!

Nutrition facts per serving (two grahamwiches):
- About 15 carbs total.
- 5 strawberries: 11 calories / 2.7g carbs.
- 2 graham crackers: 59 calories / 10.5g carbs.
- 2 Tablespoons Low-Fat cream cheese: 70 calories / 2g carbs.