

Aurora mom fights myths on Type 1 diabetes



By Brock Weir

Sometimes Miriam Goodger can just brush it off, but the number of times she has been 'verbally attacked' in public, she says, are too numerous to count.

When people see the Aurora woman quickly give her young son a can of Coke to down when his blood sugar becomes low, she is chastised by people saying she is giving him Diabetes, but that is just one misconception surrounding Type 1 that Ms. Goodger hopes to dispel next month.

'Type 1 is an autoimmune disease and there is no known cause,' she says. 'When he is low, I have to get his sugar up because it can be deadly and it is a 24 hour job. When you're Type 2, you're not supposed to give them sugar.'

There once was a time, however, when Ms. Goodger knew as much as the general public on the differences and nuances between Type 1 and Type 2 Diabetes. But then her young toddler, Mason, began to display flu like symptoms.

The young boy lost three pounds in a week, became very restless and developed an insatiable thirst.

At first, doctors diagnosed him with the flu, but that all changed when his father was home with him one day and all of a sudden Mason was staring blankly and was unresponsive. They called 911 and as soon as paramedics did a finger prick to test his blood sugar, they were off on a whirlwind medical journey.

Now, Mason's health is monitored 24/7 by two devices; one pumps insulin into his body every three minutes, and he also wears a Dexcom device, which continuously monitors his blood glucose levels, tracks the results, and uploads them online and to wristwatch devices his parents wear at all times should Mason experience a low and immediately need a sugar boost.

It is a tiring experience for the family ' and a costly one.

Maintaining each of these devices runs the family thousands of dollars each year and on March 6, from 5 ' 8 p.m., Newmarket's Boston Pizza is hosting an event to help the family raise funds to keep everything in check and within budget. The kid-friendly event will feature crafts and games for the kids, along with raffles, a 50/50 draw and a silent auction to bring in the funds, which will go

directly to the medical companies and held in Mason's name to pay for the supplies. You don't even have to participate in the activities to help. All you have to do is order a meal at the restaurant and a portion of the sales will be donated to the cause by the restaurant.

'There is no coverage for these devices,' says Ms. Goodger. 'With everything, it comes to about \$8,000 a year. The government says they are a luxury and you can finger poke, but with finger poking it is typically 10 to 15 times a day when there are no issues. But there are always issues. There is always something going a bit wonky.'

Although funds to finance Mason's medical monitoring will be great, Ms. Goodger is also working hard to ensure the event raises awareness on Type 1 Diabetes and the differences between that diagnosis and Type 2.

It is very uncommon for someone as young as Mason, who happened to be 16 months at the time, to be diagnosed, and when his parents were faced with the diagnosis they found they had few people to turn to who had a full appreciation of what they were going through. Miriam started a Facebook group to share stories and support, but there is much work to be done.

'I knew absolutely nothing about [Type 1] until I had to live with it,' she says. 'We lost four kids last week [in North America] to Type 1 and that is the reality of it. If this can help one person, it will be huge. People need to understand that this isn't easy. If your little person is showing flu-like symptoms and your doctor brushes you off, all it takes is a finger poke.'

'All he had to do was poke Mason's finger. It doesn't hurt, and they would have known then that there was something wrong and they could have saved a lot of heartache. I just wish it was something mandatory for wellness checks just so they would check it before they get to a point.'

Attendees of the March 6 event will also have an opportunity to sign a petition urging Provincial lawmakers to re-think their stance deeming such monitoring devices as 'luxuries'.

'This is something that is a necessity, especially for kids who are hypo-unaware, which Mason is,' explains Miriam. 'He does not wake up when he is low. He will sleep through the scary lows and he might not wake up. He cried today and said, 'I don't want diabetes anymore!' and that just kills your heart.'

For more, visit masonsbattle.com.