

Brian's blog on diabetes, happiness, everything you wanted to know about me and some things you didn't

Happy 31st Birthday to My Diabetes

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tags: blood glucose management, diabetic, insulin dependent diabetes, Insulin pump therapy, juvenile diabetes, Type 1 diabetes

In the immortal words of The Smiths, I'm here to wish you an unhappy birthday. Some 31 years ago today, I was admitted to Children's Hospital of Philadelphia to learn that my pancreas was no longer operational, changing my life forever.

Over the course of these 31 years, I've experienced (all numbers rough estimates) approximately 31,000 insulin injections, 40,000 finger pricks to test blood sugar, about 10 glucose meters (three within the past year alone), and A1c results that average around 6.5.

I've written in the past about my **pessimism about whether we'll ever find a cure for diabetes** (<http://type1philly.com/2013/10/10/then-and-now/>). (Hint: No, I really don't.) However, even without a cure, this is the world I've become used to. (The fact that three quarters of my life has been lived this way probably helps with that perception.) I remember being asked years ago what the first thing I would do if diabetes was cured. I think I said something sarcastic (I know. From me?) like "take a nap." Really, though, I have no idea what I'd do. A lot of time would be freed. I'd probably eat anything I want, with less thought about the consequences.

Life, I'm sure, would be a whole lot better if I'd never experienced an insulin shock. Maybe I would have been able to achieve more athletically, as that fear would no longer have been hanging over me. Probably not. I think I've done alright.

But really, how would my life have changed if I was never diagnosed diabetic? I don't know. For 31 years, it's been a big part of how some people have defined me. (How I do, to some extent; the way others do even more.) Over the past year, as I've been writing about my relationship with my faulty pancreas, I think it's empowered me to be aware of the luck I've had in my life; my amazing wife, son and family; **great friends who have always been there for me** (<https://type1philly.wordpress.com/2013/11/05/i-get-by-with-a-little-help-from-my-friends/>).

I've taken a step to try out what's being called "artificial pancreas" technology. I've made a decision to shout at the top of my lungs when the company who makes my "artificial pancreas" technology doesn't do their job to my satisfaction. As someone who's dealt with this condition for so long, it's time for me to become more of an advocate and do less standing by, waiting for someone else to take the reins.

I've been put in touch with a lot of great like minds in the blogosphere, and I'm looking forward to being able to help them spread the word about advocacy efforts.

So, happy birthday to my failed islets of Langerhans. You are rapidly approaching middle age.

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