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Health & Fitness

Raising Teens with Diabetes: A Survival Guide for Parents
Moira McCarthy
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"Transitioning teens' diabetes care from your full supervision to something they handle on their own is not done with the snap of a finger," writes Moira McCarthy, author and public speaker, who has organized a readily comprehensible handbook for parents of teenagers with juvenile (Type I) diabetes.

"Raising a child with diabetes is all-consuming … it can wear you down," McCarthy writes. "The best thing a parent and teen can do is gather information." Adolescence is a testing time for families, but more so when the teen suffers from diabetes. McCarthy emphasizes that all teens just want to be normal and accepted; having to prick their finger, carry an insulin pump, even to admit that they have a medical condition, frustrates that need to fit in with their peers. Because of this, while at school or with their friends, teens may neglect vital medical routine they were apparently responsible about when they were preteens. In short, a good kid can turn into an adolescent monster, and that monster can wind up in the ER—an experience the author recounts.

McCarthy's book sagely advises a team approach. School nurses and other counselors will have to be on board, and teens will need to try to let others know that they have a special condition. But even this strategy needs to be brokered with some buy-in from teens who are in a process of becoming adults and need to be given autonomy. It's a learning experience for teen and parent.

McCarthy's new book makes a logical progression from her previous book, *The Everything Parents' Guide to Children with Juvenile Diabetes*. It's human scale and parent-friendly, and could even be a readable manual for older teens. Driving and drinking can be big issues for all teens, but especially so for those with diabetes. So, this book includes a parent-child agreement about driving habits, and suggestions about which alcoholic beverages are more suitable for diabetics.

In sixteen chapters, the book covers everything from the physiology of adolescence (hormones, growth spurts, mood swings) to a call for advocacy. It concludes with tips for sending one's grown child off to college. *Raising Teens with Diabete*s includes a resource guide of books, blogs, and programs. All the details of this hands-on guide point to careful editing, professional reviewing, and a thoughtful, compassionate approach to the population and its unique problems.

Parents of adolescents struggling with juvenile diabetes and all of its attendant issues will welcome McCarthy's latest offering.

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