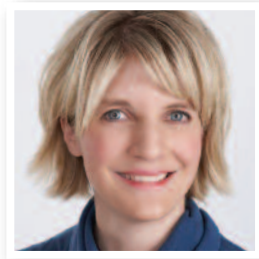


Leading by EXAMPLE by

Dallas Oler is 77 years old, with a firm handshake, ready smile and fitness that all belie the fact that he has Type 1 diabetes.



Wendy Sanders, ARNP
Mercy Physician Services
Internist Associates of Iowa

Diabetes may be more common and better managed today, but few can claim what Dallas can: having lived with diabetes on insulin for 75 years. That achievement brought him a special recognition medal this summer through Joslin Diabetes Center in Boston. Mercy's Joslin Diabetes Center has been an affiliate of the Boston Joslin Diabetes Center since 2008.

Dallas is one of only 28 people with diabetes, nationwide, awarded the distinctive 75-year medal by Joslin Diabetes Center since 1996. In recognition of his receiving this medal, Dallas was honored Nov. 4 by healthcare providers and family members at a ceremony at Joslin Diabetes Center.

Growing up on a farm north of Manchester, Dallas was diagnosed with diabetes at age 2. At that time, the medical world knew little about managing diabetes, especially in small towns, so Dallas was referred to Iowa City for his healthcare.

"It was a struggle," Dallas says, "especially as a child. I was there at the hospital for six months. I didn't recognize family when they came to see me." At age 5, he started school in Iowa City; every six months through adolescence, Dallas went there for medical check-ups.

"Sometimes they'd keep me and sometimes they wouldn't," he says. "I felt like a guinea pig."

He also remembers taking insulin shots

four times a day. In school, his teacher administered them. He checked his glucose (blood sugar) levels by urinating in a bottle. A solution was added to the urine and the mixture was boiled. Later methods relied on a test strip that changed color according to blood sugar level.

Today, like others with diabetes, Dallas checks his glucose levels with a small drop of blood, using a home glucose meter. His insulin shots initially were given with glass syringes with stainless steel needles that were sterilized and reused. Today, people giving insulin injections use either disposable syringes or a device called an insulin pen.

Dallas soon recognized symptoms of low blood sugar: becoming sweaty, shaky or disoriented. Once, in the 1970s, he got lost driving home and called a friend to get directions. Pat, Dallas's wife of 57 years, remembers Dallas keeping Pepsi cola nearby in

case his blood sugar level dropped. "When we were dating, he always had a candy bar in his pocket," she adds.

In recent years, Dallas was a patient of Dr. Charles Pruchno, a Cedar Rapids internist, now a hospitalist. Dallas's current provider is Wendy Sanders, an ARNP who works with Joslin patients. She credits Dr. Pruchno and Dallas himself for establishing his good habits.

"Dallas has had no severe complications from diabetes because of his excellent self-



management," Sanders says. "He's a self-motivated person with a positive attitude; he's gone through a lot."

"After a while living with it, you get used to it," Dallas says modestly. His philosophy is simple: Take good care of what you've got. "The secret is to stay active," he says. "Stick with a light, healthy diet. And always get out and do something every day; I walk my dog, Molly, every night."

Sanders says Dallas is a role model for managing diabetes with insulin.

"He's accurate in counting his carbohydrates and he exercises every day," she explains. "He leads by example. He doesn't just talk the talk."

**"He doesn't
just talk
the talk."**

Pat Oler
Wife of Dallas Oler



Contact the Joslin Diabetes Center at (319) 398-6711.