**A Type 1 Diabetes diagnosis doesn't mean giving up on your dreams, just look at World Series champion Garrett Mitchell (PRINT)**

Milwaukee Brewers center fielder Garrett Mitchell achieved every baseball player's ultimate dream this October as he helped lead the Brewers to the franchise's first-ever World Series championship. That victory is an experience that very few people will ever have. What is far more common, however, is the condition Mitchell had to manage throughout his team's postseason run.

Mitchell is one of more than two million Americans living with Type 1 diabetes (T1D), a chronic autoimmune condition in which the body's immune system mistakenly attacks the beta cells in the pancreas that create insulin. When enough of these cells are destroyed, the body produces very little or no insulin.

Without insulin, blood glucose cannot enter the body and instead builds up in the bloodstream, causing hyperglycemia (high blood glucose). Over time, high blood glucose can lead to complications like cardiovascular disease, kidney disease and nerve damage. To avoid those complications, people with T1D must monitor their blood glucose levels and take insulin daily.

Mitchell, like most people with Type 1 diabetes, was diagnosed when he was a kid. That has given him the time and experience to successfully manage his condition while also managing the physical demands of his job as a professional athlete. He wears a constant glucose monitor and receives insulin through a tubeless pump.

Pat Rizzuto, MD, is a pediatric endocrinologist at the Pediatric Diabetes Resource Center at OSF HealthCare Children's Hospital of Illinois and an assistant professor at University of Illinois College of Medicine Peoria. He himself has lived with T1D for nearly 40 years and says that noticing signs and symptoms early is critical in producing positive outcomes.

**Signs and Symptoms of Type 1 diabetes**

**"**The common symptoms associated with diabetes are drinking a lot and peeing a lot," Dr. Rizzuto says. "The issue is as your blood sugar gets higher and higher, your kidneys can't hold onto all that sugar, and you start making more pee than you should and so that dehydrates you. Then you start drinking a lot to make up for it."

Dr. Rizzuto adds that it is particularly concerning when the increase in urination happens both day and night or over multiple weeks. He recommends that parents noticing these types of symptoms get in touch with their child's primary care provider to help catch the condition in its early stages.

He is also an advocate of screening prior to symptoms developing if a child has a family history of Type 1 diabetes or another autoimmune condition, both of which put them at higher risk for T1D.

**Importance of Early Detection and Intervention**

**"**We can actually see evidence of Type 1 diabetes brewing months or years before symptoms develop," Dr. Rizzuto says. "It's very important to me and the community that we do more screening for Type 1 diabetes because there's support that we can give even before the blood sugars have gotten to the point where those symptoms are developing."

This screening is done through a simple blood test that looks for certain antibodies. Preemptive screening can have a lifesaving impact.

"When Type 1 diabetes goes unrecognized in children long enough for their insulin to drop to an extremely low level, they're at risk of developing what's called diabetic ketoacidosis," Dr. Rizzuto says. "This is an extremely dangerous, life-threatening state. In settings where there's screening of the population, we see a decrease of over 90% in the risk for diabetic ketoacidosis or DKA. That's extremely exciting to me as an endocrinologist to be able to almost eliminate that risk."

Dr. Rizzuto adds that pre-symptomatic diagnosis can also be beneficial in that it allows for the use of medications that slow down the process of depleting the body's natural insulin sources, allowing kids a few extra years of not having to worry about their blood sugars or taking insulin daily.

When they do eventually need to start their insulin management regimen, Dr. Rizzuto and the team at the Pediatric Diabetes Resource Center are there to help.

**Whole patient care at Pediatric Diabetes Resource Center at OSF Children's Hospital of Illinois**

"While diabetes management does boil down to taking insulin and monitoring blood sugar, it's easier said than done," Dr. Rizzuto stated. "What you need is a specialized team of people who are experts at different dimensions of life with diabetes. At our Diabetes Resource Center, we have a big team of people who are dedicated to help kids live completely ordinary lives, the same as they would without diabetes."

That team includes nurses, educators, dietitians, social workers and more support staff that assist with every aspect of the condition.

With early detection, intervention and treatment like that offered at the Pediatric Diabetes Resource Center, Garrett Mitchell became a key part of the Brewers' run to the World Series, hitting the home run that put Milwaukee ahead for good in the final game of the National League Championship Series against the Dodgers. He is an outspoken advocate for kids with T1D, a role model that Dr. Rizzuto says is hugely important.

**All Dreams are Possible with T1D**

"When you look at Garrett, you wouldn't know he has diabetes just looking at him," Dr. Rizzuto says "He lives an ordinary life. Extraordinary in the sense of baseball, but you can see that diabetes hasn't kept him from exceptionality. That's something we want for all our patients, to be exceptional in what they are passionate about."

Dr. Rizzuto further points to singer Nick Jonas and ultramarathoner Ben Eakin as inspirational touchstones for kids navigating a T1D diagnosis. You can also put Dr. Rizzuto himself in that same category.

"I have had Type 1 diabetes for almost 40 years now, and I have a completely ordinary, normal life," he says. "It hasn't kept me from doing the things I want to do in life. Children prosper and thrive and go on to achieve their dreams the same as their peers, the same as their friends. Diabetes doesn't hold you back."

To learn more about managing childhood diabetes, visit the OSF HealthCare Pediatric Diabetes Resource Center website. Explore care options, meet providers, find diabetes-friendly recipes and learn what to expect at an appointment. To schedule an appointment, ask your primary care provider for a referral.