

Zanique's Testimony

Introduction

Thank You everyone for this opportunity to engage and share with you my experience living with type 1 Diabetes during COVID19 pandemic while living in St.Lucia. My Name is Zanique Edwards and I am 29 years of age, I am insulin dependent and I take an injection with every meal.

Pre- Quarantine Anxiety

Let us jump right into this even before our island went on lock down with only 1 COVID case on island at the time, I was already overwhelmed with anxiety. With all this talk in the world about stopping flights and hearing stories about persons I know personally living with Diabetes in places in the world having to ration insulin I become consumed with worry. I was concerned with not getting access to my insulin and not being able to order in medical testing supplies. While the world went on a rampage for toilet paper my rampage and others like myself I am sure can attest was for getting at least a 6 months' supply of insulin, other medication and testing supplies. With help from my team I was able to put these worries to rest and acquire enough medication and testing supplies to last for that time frame.

Quarantine

Let us fast forward to quarantine. During COVID19 I became committed to a more sedentary lifestyle. I went from engaging in daily physical activity to laying on the couch and watching Netflix all day. This was accompanied by some of my favorite high carb high salt snacks. For me snacking came with weight gain and increased blood sugar readings.

Not being happy about this weight gain I decided to change my approach. I figured the best way to approach living was to build my immune system to be able to fight off anything. I decided to eat healthier and really try to commit to regular physical activity. The problem for me is not starting but having the discipline enough to stick to it. I gradually reduced my snack consumption and started to research the benefits of different foods. I would normally eat small portions of salad, but I was not someone who would CHOOSE salad and that started to change. I Started to choose having a salad and reducing my carbohydrate intake. A bonus to this was me signing up for a back yard gardening project with the OECS and HCC which basically encourages individuals to grow their own foods and eat healthier. At the time I had no experience in gardening but I thought with our current times and possible food crisis this would be very relevant. The whole idea behind going to your backyard and harvesting exactly what you need like tomatoes, kale, lettuce and cucumbers to make today's salad is very rewarding.

Adaptations and Modifications

Making these adjustments, though I was making healthier choices it came with it's own challenges as now I have to make adjustments to my medication doses to properly match my food consumption. This entire time has afforded me the opportunity to truly experiment with food and discover how my body reacts to different food. Living with and managing my diabetes can become quite challenging. What may

work for me may not necessarily work for you. So, this has truly allowed me to further discover my self and become more aware of the way my body works.

Questions to be asked to Zanique :

1. Do you have the bad kind of diabetes to be taking an injection with every meal ?

My being on an injection with every meal is a way for us to mimic the actions of the pancreas from the outside of the body. The regime is more physiological and allows me to get better control with my diabetes. Since we don't have insulin pumps in St.Lucia this method of taking an injection with every meal is the next best thing we can use. This is what comes closest to representing the pancreas. Every time you eat the pancreas releases a small dose of insulin since my pancreas is not producing insulin I am using a substitute which are my insulin injections. The dosing with each meals allows more flexibility in type 1 diabetics.