
Transcript: Managing Diabetes and Increasing the Quality of Life for an Entire Family

AACC Divisions are communities of practice devoted to scientific specialties in laboratory medicine. This story highlights the Critical and Point-of-Care Testing Division. It relates how point-of-care technology is used in the physician's office and patient's home to diagnose and monitor the treatment of diabetes.

In late November 2007, Susan and Mike Schraf noticed some changes in their 14-year-old son Kevin. Normally a funny, fun-loving, quiet teen, Kevin was tired, moody, and difficult to be around. [Quote from Susan.] After approximately 2 weeks of slowly increasing symptom severity, Susan and Mike decided to take Kevin to see his primary care physician at the Hershey Medical Center in Hershey, Pennsylvania.

Upon hearing Kevin's symptoms, Dr He suspected type I diabetes. A point-of-care finger stick blood test with a SureStep Pro Diabetes meter in the physician's office determined that his blood sugar was 600 mg/dL. In addition, Dr He could smell the ketones on Kevin's breath. Kevin was transferred to the hospital for additional tests to confirm the diabetes diagnosis and to rule out any other medical issues.

It is estimated that type I diabetes—an autoimmune disorder often affecting children and adults—comprises 5% to 10% of all diabetes cases. Approximately 15 million people have been diagnosed with a form of diabetes and have had to face the same treatment and lifestyle decisions as the Schraf family. Susan and Mike were shocked and confused after hearing Kevin's diagnosis. [Quote from Susan.]

Kevin's condition changed the diet and mindset of his entire family. Changes in the family's diet were not the only household changes. Susan and Mike immediately set out to learn more about this disease. [Quote from Mike.]

Type I diabetes, like many other medical conditions, requires a team of experts to assist the patient in managing his treatment effectively. Throughout his appointments and the learning process of the past year, Kevin has developed good relationships with his whole support team—his primary care physician, his endocrinologist, the nurses at the endocrinology center, and the center's diabetes educators.

Kevin, and the whole Schraf family, have learned the importance and practice of portion control and how to make healthy food selection choices. With the help of point of care devices, such as his blood glucose monitor and his insulin pen, Kevin monitors his blood sugar and self-

administers insulin. Susan and Mike are grateful for the health of their family and proud of Kevin's conscientiousness in the wake of his diagnosis.

This story is part of a series on the personal impact of AACC's communities of practice. Join AACC's Critical and Point-of-Care Testing Division and interact with other scientists who are working to improve patient care. To learn more, go to the AACC website.

<http://www.aacc.org/members/divisions/cpopt/Pages/default.aspx>

The CPOCT Division would like to thank Marcy Anderson, for her assistance in the creation and production of this audiocast, and the Schraf family for their time and willingness to share their story. Please see the transcript for a picture of the family and for additional information.

Editor's note: While specific devices have been mentioned within this piece because of their use by a physician, a laboratory, or a patient, AACC is not promoting or advocating the use of any specific device.



The Schraf family on the morning of the 2008 Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation Walk for a Cure. Pictured from left to right: Kevin, Mike (back row), Ryan, Susan (back row), Eric, and Adam (far right).

References:

1. Centers for Disease Control: Diabetes Projects. <http://www.cdc.gov/DIABETES/projects/cda2.htm>
2. American Diabetes Association: Type 1 Diabetes. <http://www.diabetes.org/type-1-diabetes.jsp>