

To Whom it May Concern,

Type 1 diabetes is a very serious, life threatening autoimmune disease. It occurs when the body's immune system mistakenly destroys the cells in the pancreas that produce insulin. Insulin allows the body to process blood glucose to create energy. Without insulin, the body literally starves as it has no fuel. Everyone needs insulin to live.

Type 1 diabetes can occur suddenly and causes a dependence on insulin for life.

No one knows exactly what causes type 1 diabetes. However, it IS known that it is NOT caused by poor diet or lack of exercise.

Type 1 diabetes CANNOT be prevented and there is no cure.

In Australia, type 1 diabetes has almost doubled over the past five years and we now have one of the highest rates of this disease worldwide. Every day 5 more Australians are diagnosed with type 1 diabetes. Most of them are children.

My son was diagnosed with type 1 diabetes in 2010, when he was 5 years old. He spent the first week after diagnosis severely ill in hospital. His blood glucose levels must be monitored constantly by pricking his finger to test his blood every 2 – 3 hours. He must have injections of insulin at least 5 times every day. That's over 1800 injections a year. When he is at school he has to do his own injections every day before lunch.

Sufferers must carefully balance their insulin intake with food and exercise.

People with type 1 diabetes must be constantly prepared for potential hypoglycaemic (low blood sugar) and hyperglycaemic (high blood sugar) reactions, which can both be life threatening.

Research has shown that insulin pump therapy can reduce the frequency of severe hypoglycaemia as well as improve the quality of life of pump users. Using a pump may also improve poor blood glucose control.

Type 1 diabetes is associated with very serious health complications.

It can affect all major organs in your body. Complications include kidney problems (diabetic nephropathy), visual impairment (diabetic retinopathy) leading to blindness and nerve damage (diabetic neuropathy) leading to amputations, due to damage to the small blood vessels. Larger vessels can be damaged too, leading to coronary artery disease (which causes angina and "heart attack"), stroke and narrowing of the limb arteries.

Long-term complications of type 1 diabetes develop gradually, over years. The earlier you develop diabetes — and the less controlled your blood sugar — the higher the risk of complications. Eventually, diabetes complications may be disabling or even life-threatening. This is very concerning considering most people are diagnosed in early childhood.

Keeping your blood sugar level close to normal most of the time can dramatically reduce the risk of many complications. Insulin pumps have been proven to give much better control of blood sugar levels than multiple daily injections.

Unfortunately, the cost of purchasing an insulin pump is something most Australian families simply cannot afford. The pump itself costs up to \$9,000 and the average cost of consumables needed for its continued use is approximately \$30 per month.

We need to make sure our children can be given the best possible chance of a healthy future. This is why it is so important for our government to continue to provide funding for insulin pump subsidies.

Kind Regards,

