



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

New support group helps kids with type 1 diabetes

PARK RAPIDS, MN (NOV. 6, 2014) – A parent of a child with type 1 diabetes will tell you that the disease affects the whole family.

Counting carbs, blood sugar monitoring, insulin injections, food measuring and out-of-region travel for medical appointments become a way of life. For parents, family and friends, it's important that all of this is done without the child feeling singled out or "different". They want to be treated like normal kids, have fun and share the same experiences as their siblings and friends.

CHI St. Joseph's Health is starting a new support group for kids with type 1 diabetes, their families and friends. "D1 Kids Club" is a support group to help families connect and share ideas while providing educational support in a fun and approachable way for kids ages 18 and under.

"Kids want to belong and feel accepted," says Tia Kocka, BSN, RN, CDE, CBN, diabetes educator. "It's so important for them to be able to connect with other kids who are experiencing the same things. It will also be an opportunity for kids and their families who are newly diagnosed to get support from families who understand what it's like."

"D1 Kids Club" will meet monthly from 6 – 7 p.m. on the second Thursday of the month. The first support group meeting is Nov. 13. It will be held at CHI St. Joseph's Health Lower Level conference rooms B&C.

This is great news for parents of children with type 1 diabetes. They experience ups and downs along with their child, from sickness to the emotional ride they know so well. They are excited at the prospects of the new group. There has been interest from local communities including families from Bemidji and Wadena.

Type 1 diabetes

“When we eat food, some of the food turns into glucose (sugar). The sugar gives energy to the body’s cells and needs help from a hormone called insulin to get into the cells. Insulin acts like a “key” to open the doors of the body’s cells to get the sugar into cells for energy,” Kocka explains.

For kids with type 1 diabetes, the pancreas stops making insulin and the sugar can’t get into the cells for energy. They need insulin shots in order to survive.

The exact cause of type 1 diabetes is unknown.

“It’s NOT caused by eating too much sugar,” Kocka says. “It can run in families. The important thing to remember is that it’s not your child’s fault. Nothing you or your child did caused his or her diabetes.”

Some symptoms of type 1 diabetes include: a very strong thirst; increased urination; blurry vision; tiredness for no obvious reason; nausea; extreme hunger; headaches; flu-like symptoms; bed wetting; and unexplained weight loss.

There is no cure for type 1 diabetes, but the good news is that the condition can be managed.

Kocka also heads up a general diabetes support group, “Living with Diabetes”. This group is for anyone with diabetes and meets from 9 – 10 a.m. the second Tuesday of every months in CHI St. Joseph’s Health Lower Level conference room A.

For more information, please contact Tia at 218.255.3684 or TiaKocka@CatholicHealth.net.

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About CHI St. Joseph’s Health

CHI St. Joseph’s Health is a 25-bed critical access hospital serving communities in Hubbard, Becker, Cass and Wadena Counties since 1946. In recent years, CHI St. Joseph’s Health’s award-winning teams took several national honors including: The Joint Commission Top Performer on Key Quality Measures in surgery; Top 100 Critical Access Hospital, HealthStrong; WomenCertified’s America’s Best Hospitals Women’s Choice Award in obstetrics; and the Studer Group Fire Starter Healthcare Organization of the Month among other national and state recognitions.

About CHI

Catholic Health Initiatives, one of the nation’s largest health systems, was formed in 1996 to strengthen the Catholic health ministry for the future. With deep roots in the tradition of expressing Christ’s love by caring for those in need, Catholic Health Initiatives serves more than four million people each year through acute care hospitals; long-term care, assisted and residential-living facilities; community-based health services; home care; research and development; and reference laboratory services.

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