

Hope for the Future from Continuous Glucose Monitoring

Today thousands of diabetics are finding hope in continuous glucose monitoring. This new experimental gadget now available monitors a diabetic's blood sugar and informs them if it falls dangerously low. Researchers have been trying to discover this mechanism for years. Now coming on the market, in the United States these monitoring devices will be available by late summer.

Although currently the monitors do not equal the accuracy of blood tests, researchers are hoping that within a couple of years continuous glucose monitoring will allow a diabetic to forgo the finger prick to test blood glucose levels. Currently, if the monitor signals that blood sugar levels are low, it is necessary to confirm with a blood test. At present the monitors are also slow to show rapidly occurring changes that result especially when you exercise. However, with improvements this makers of these monitors are working to make finger lances outdated for all diabetics.

Those who have tried the monitors have reported little discomfort. A patch worn on the abdomen may be slightly uncomfortable when applied due to a tiny wire placed under the skin to measure the cell-fluid glucose. Once the patch is in place, it is comfortable to have on and transmits information to a receiver. The receiver is approximately the same size as a cell phone. One patch can be worn for several days before it needs changing. Just imagine how this can impact the health of diabetics! Control of chronic diabetes-related complications stems from the ability to control blood glucose levels.

The continuous glucose monitoring reports are being looked at with great interest by the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation. They believe that a the ability to greatly control or even erase diabetes is on the horizon. The Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation raises funds for research through bake sales and diabetes marches throughout the country. They in search of funds to continue research on these new monitoring devices demonstrating how they will affect hospitalization due to kidney disease, heart problems, or other complications. The JDRF also believes that car accidents can be reduced by alleviating accidents caused by impaired diabetics.

Researchers are working toward the goal of pairing the new monitoring device with insulin pumps. These pumps have been in existence for years and by combining them with the monitoring device, could reduce to a minimum the time needed to control diabetes. One such product was approved on April 13 and is now being offered for sale. It is not fully automatic yet, as the monitoring portion of the device will not be available until later this summer, but its development is promising news for those who are trying to control Type 1 or Type 2 diabetes. This device, is actually an external, artificial pancreas that controls blood sugar levels for days. The diabetic would be responsible for programing in upcoming meals and exercise. The glucose-monitoring device has been in development by scientists and researchers since the early 1960's. They now believe they are nearing that goal.