

How do the diabetes camps work, if I help?

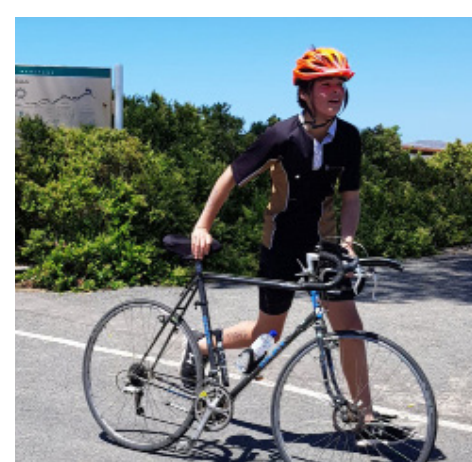
As a part of Diabetes Tasmania youth program, we provide age specific camps especially designed for children with type 1 diabetes. The focus for each camp is companionship, support, education and fun. Peer support is one of the main benefits, hanging out with people who understand what life is like with type 1 diabetes, share stories and solutions to challenges they've experienced.

Those who have attended camps in the past will have happy memories of a great time at camp and the friendships formed there. Everyone at camp understands about living with diabetes, and no one lets that get in the way of having fun, getting active, having a go at some adventure activities as well as having time to chill out and chat with new and old friends.

Our Youth Program Coordinator, and a team of diabetes educators, dietitians, cabin 'buddies' and activity providers will coordinate each of the camps.

There are two really important camps that we need your help with, as they are run solely from our own fundraising and donations to Diabetes Tasmania, there is no outside funding for these, and without your help we won't be able to run them.

"Diabetes Tasmania's Youth Camp normalised diabetes for Archie and made him realise that he was not alone on this often isolating, difficult and painful journey as a type 1 kid. As a family we made valuable connections with other type 1 families who share our challenges and we feel as though the heavy emotional load that comes with type 1 is now shared. Archie talks about camp as being his 'people like me' home and it is a true highlight of our year and that it is 'the only good thing about diabetes'. The diagnosis of type 1 brought many many tears for our family and so does our yearly visit to camp except that the camp tears are from the joy being amongst 'our people'. We can't thank Diabetes Tasmania enough!!" – **Jessica, Mum of Archie.**



Family Camp - for the whole family!

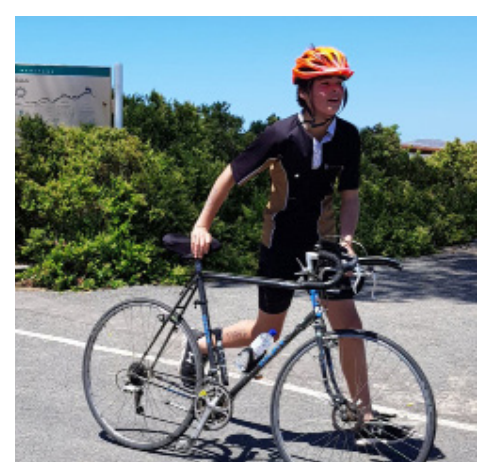
Our Family Camp is a chance for children aged up to 6 years old with type 1 diabetes to spend time with their families in a camp environment where they can meet other children and families who are living with type 1 diabetes.

At a recent Family Camp, the youngest camper, at three and a half years old was attending her third camp and had grown so much. She proudly displayed her pump and sensor to the other kids and took everything in her stride. Testing before meals and having insulin was part of every day and a very normal thing to do at this camp which gives the kids a sense of belonging and normality.

Adult time is also an important part of family camp, where parents/carers can spend a little time with each other whilst the kids are engaged in an activity. Ideas are shared and support networks are made, which will help in the future to support each and every-one who attends this camp.

It is a special place where young people with diabetes can feel 'normal' and families can learn about how others are living with diabetes – especially those with a new diagnosis of one of their young children, many of whom may not have known anything about type 1 diabetes prior to this diagnosis.

Discussion points: Can you imagine being 3 years old and having to have multiple daily injections of insulin for the rest of your life? Having an insulin pump connected to you? Working out your carbs for every meal?



Young Adult Retreat

This camp is an opportunity for young adults aged 18 – 25 years to spend 4 days with their peers in a supported environment which fosters the development of independence and self-confidence.

Going out into the world by yourself and establishing your own independence can be hard, but when you have approximately **180 EXTRA decisions a day** to make just relating to your diabetes, it can be a lot harder and sometimes a bit scary.

Our young adults come together at the retreat and take themselves out of their comfort zone, by climbing mountains, trekking through the bush, sailing down mountains and by doing this it helps them learn that living with type 1 diabetes, does not have to stop you doing anything that you put your mind too, as long as you have the right support, knowledge, and tools for the job.

Discussion point: How would you cope with 180 EXTRA decisions to make a day?

"I decided to reach out and put my name down to attend a diabetes camp as a leader, not expecting it to change my life. I went thinking I'd help the children and build morale, but I left with so much more. I met the most incredible support team and learnt that all the information I'd been given, was nowhere near enough. I'd fallen through a gap in the health care system and there was so much more for me to learn about how to manage my own type 1 diabetes.

I had spent a year not knowing anything about 'carb counting' or adjusting my insulin doses according to the amount of carbs I had in a meal or snack. I had no idea that there were formulas to try and workout my doses. I'd just been 'guesstimating'.

These children I'd spent four days with, taught me more about my condition than the medical professionals I'd been paying to see.

In the months since camp, I have developed a whole new handle on type 1 diabetes. I have a new endocrinologist, and diabetes educator and I finally feel like I'm no longer 'living with diabetes' but diabetes is 'living with me'" – **Sarah Gillies, adult who lives with type 1 diabetes and camp buddy**

