

## **“Life (*and Death*) Happens Between Finger Sticks” Campaign Fact Sheet**

### **Diabetes is the seventh leading cause of death in the United States.**

- Diabetes is the seventh leading cause of death according to the U.S. Center for Disease Control and Prevention. ([http://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/pubs/pdf/ndfs\\_2011.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/pubs/pdf/ndfs_2011.pdf)).
- Overall, the risk for death among people with diabetes is about twice that of people of similar age but without diabetes according to the CDCP. ([http://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/pubs/pdf/ndfs\\_2011.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/pubs/pdf/ndfs_2011.pdf)).

### **Hypoglycemic unawareness is one of the most dangerous and life-threatening consequences of diabetes.**

- One in four Type I diabetes patients have experienced hypoglycemic unawareness, a complication of diabetes in which the patient is unaware of a deep drop in blood sugar because it fails to trigger the characteristic symptoms. (Source: Diabetes and Driving, Diabetes Care, 2006).
- Hypoglycemic unawareness can result in prolonged hypoglycemia, seizures, loss of consciousness, brain damage or even death. (Source: Wolpert, Hierarchy of Responses to Hypoglycemia J Diabetes Sci Technol. 2007 January; 1(1): 146–150).

### **Drops in blood sugar can make operating a motor vehicle dangerous.**

- Mild hypoglycemia can impair driving judgment. Severe hypoglycemia prevents safe driving and can contribute to vehicle fatalities. (Source: Diabetic Drivers With and Without a History of Recurrent Hypoglycemia-Related Driving Mishaps, Diabetes Care, 2010)
- Among U.S. persons with type 1 diabetes, 31% admitted to driving in hypoglycemic stupor during the past 2 years. (Source: John Hopkins Point of Care Information Technology Center, “Driving with Diabetes” 2-4-11) ([http://www.ttdiabetesguide.org/management/social\\_legal/full\\_driving\\_with\\_diabetes.html](http://www.ttdiabetesguide.org/management/social_legal/full_driving_with_diabetes.html))
- Insulin-treated diabetes is second only to epilepsy as the leading cause of medical-related motor vehicle accidents. (Source: John Hopkins Point of Care Information Technology Center, “Driving with Diabetes” 2-4-11)
- According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, diabetic drivers have nearly two times more “at fault accidents.” (Source: John Hopkins Point of Care Information Technology Center, “Driving with Diabetes” 2-4-11)

### **Hypoglycemia can trigger “dead-in-bed” syndrome.**

- Diabetics are at risk for “dead-in-bed” syndrome, a tragic outcome of a failure to adequately monitor glucose levels during sleep. This tragedy accounts for deaths in approximately 6 percent of diabetics younger than 40. (Source: “Confirmation of Hypoglycemia in the ‘Dead-In-Bed’ Syndrome, as Captured by a Retrospective Continuous Glucose Monitoring System,” Endocrine Practice, 2010)

### **Finger stick monitoring is not enough to control hypoglycemia.**

- Self-monitoring of blood glucose (SMBG) is believed to be a useful component of patient self-care practices. The ADA recommends that SMBG be carried out 3 or more

times daily for patient using multiple insulin injections or insulin pump therapy. (Source: Diabetes Care, January 2011, Vol 34, no. Supplement 1 S11-S61).

- But a finger stick provides information only about the glucose level at a single, isolated moment in time; it does not reveal the direction glucose is heading, or the speed with which it may be dropping or rising.
- Glucose is in constant motion and levels can drop quickly, without notice, causing hypoglycemia.
- Eight percent of emergency room visits, or 50,000 visits, can be attributed to insulin/low blood sugar. (National Surveillance of Emergency Department Visits for Outpatient Adverse Drug Events, JAMA, 2006)
- Emergency room visits unnecessarily raise the cost of diabetes care. Many visits can be prevented with continuous glucose monitoring.

### **Continuous glucose monitoring (CGM) may help prevent dangerous drops in blood sugar.**

- In November 2011, Dexcom launched the “Life (and Death) Happens Between Finger Sticks” campaign, a public awareness campaign about the importance of real-time continuous glucose monitoring (CGM) that can help protect people with diabetes while driving, sleeping or at other critical times.

CGM is widely considered to be one of the most significant breakthroughs in diabetes management in the past 40 years. (Source: [http://www.jdrf.org/index.cfm?page\\_id=111318](http://www.jdrf.org/index.cfm?page_id=111318), 2009).

- CGM gives a more complete picture of blood sugar than a finger stick, measuring glucose at regular and frequent intervals.
- The Dexcom CGM is a device that is inserted just under the skin of the abdomen by the user. The sensor in the device measures the glucose level and sends the information to a monitor.
- Several devices have been developed for continuous glucose monitoring; only one—the Dexcom SEVEN PLUS CGM—has been approved by the FDA for up to seven days of wear. (Source: Dexcom Seven Plus User Guide, 2009).
- The Dexcom CGM provides readings every 5 minutes, or the equivalent of 288 data points in a 24-hour period, providing a significantly more comprehensive picture of one’s glucose level than fingersticks alone can. It also alerts the patient if his or her blood sugar is going too high or too low, both of which are potentially life-threatening events.

### **For More Information:**

[www.dexcom.com](http://www.dexcom.com)

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