

# Diabetes Saved My Life

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Six years ago I was quite obese (according to BMI charts, morbidly), had a sedentary lifestyle, ate out all the time, and stayed as far away from the doctor as I could. I knew that this was not a good thing and was probably going to have a heart attack or stroke sometime, but did nothing to fix it at the time. I worked hard and long hours (at a desk) and was under a lot of stress as a rule, but had always felt I was doing a good job. I just kept plugging along.

Then I started having trouble concentrating and had what could best be described as “brain fog” and serious fatigue. My staff noticed and did an “intervention” (as I refer to it). I went to my doctor who told me I had developed diabetes with an A1C over 10. I didn’t recognize the seriousness of this diagnosis until I met with the diabetes educator. In our conversation, she talked about the consequences of unmanaged diabetes. What caught my ear was her mention of amputation of feet and legs and blindness. And then she said “It’s not IF you have complications, it is WHEN you have complications.” These 2 statements hit me hard and I decided that it was time for me to do something. The doctor recommended weight loss and exercise as well as 2 oral meds. So I started a new course in my life and took control, hoping to ward off those terrible consequences. I joined the local Wellness Center and became a regular walker, changed my diet and wrote down every calorie and carb I put in my mouth. After about 6 months, I had lost 80 pounds and my A1C had dropped to 5.4.

I have continued to lift weights/exercise at the Center and walk 4-6 miles every day rain, snow, sun, wind etc. since then, entering them faithfully into my pedometer. I stopped drinking any kind of pop, diet or otherwise, and eat much healthier and most often at home (I am often surprised that McDonald’s and Burger King didn’t go bankrupt without my business!!) I have kept most of the weight off but could do better in that Department as do not document my eating like I used to. My A1C continues to range from 5.4 to 5.7. I am now only on metformin and in general feel better, stronger and healthier, than in years. I have become a grandma since then and find much more energy to play with grandkids and have fun with them at their level. I have much more quality in my life in every area!

I know you have heard this before from others but it is true for me: Diabetes saved my life as it forced me to take control of my health and wellness and do what I knew needed to be done. I recognized my need to be the leader of my medical team and not just an unmotivated participant. **wellNEssoptions** has helped me through these last 6 years, both with the Coaching program and Walk This Way, as I strive for 10,000 steps a day and more! It has added to my personal motivation and progress.

One of the other things I have been proud to be part of is the improved health of those around me. My husband, my kids, even members of my community have seen my efforts and progress and have started eating better, exercising and/or walking/moving more and have told me that I have been the inspiration for them to do things differently in their own lives. It has been a difficult journey in many ways but one so worth making. I changed my mind set to be healthy!

