



Imagine a life lived well

By Alexandra Laskie

When she presented to him covered in abscesses and boils, and complaining of constant thirst, Dawn Hunt's doctor told her she was suffering from a wild imagination.

"I didn't realise what was wrong with me; I was covered in boils, but the doctor just didn't accept my explanation. He said 'no doctor would ever cure me because I was suffering from imagination,'" she said.

But Ms Hunt, now 89, wasn't convinced. So she booked herself an appointment at the Royal Melbourne hospital for a second opinion.

"When I saw [the doctor there], he said I should have collapsed in a coma on the street.

"They ran out of graph paper my blood sugar levels were so high," she said.

The doctor diagnosed her with diabetes on the spot. It just so happened to be her 30th birthday.

"It was a lovely birthday present," Ms Hunt said.

The Taylors Lakes resident has lived a full life with the help of daily insulin injections for almost 60 years now.

"I've come a long way since my diagnosis. I now know the best places to have an injection

(she said the side of the stomach and the upper arm are the least painful).

"It was very difficult back then because I had two young children, who were seven and nine, and even though my mother-in-law was a diabetic, she didn't offer me much information because she didn't really understand the disease either," she said.

But she didn't let it bother her.

"I just tried to do my best."

Next month, Diabetes Victoria will launch an awareness campaign to coincide with National Diabetes Week, on from July 10 to July 16.

The campaign is designed to help people affected by or at risk of developing diabetes and show them how their diagnosis doesn't have to stop them living a full and active life.

Ms Hunt said she is still constantly learning about how her body handles the disease. During National Diabetes Week, Ms Hunt will receive a Kellion Victoria Medal for living a long life with the disease. She will receive the award in the 60-year category.



(Joe Mastroianni)

DAWN HUNT (FRONT) WITH DAUGHTER HEATHER

DAWN HUNT (FRONT) WITH DAUGHTER HEATHER