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DAFNE works – long-lasting benefits in type 1 diabetes management

Structured diabetes education is key to improve long-term glycaemic control in diabetes. Diabetes Victoria welcomes the recent release of a UK study¹ examining the long-term health benefits of participating in the Dose Adjustment for Normal Eating (DAFNE) education program and encourages health professionals to refer more people with type 1 diabetes to this beneficial structured self-management program.

“The study found that participation in DAFNE can reduce HbA1c significantly with benefits being sustained for five years,” says Eileen Collins, Credentialed Diabetes Educator (Nurse) and OzDAFNE National Coordinator “There are psychosocial benefits, and significant reductions in severe hypoglycaemia and diabetic ketoacidosis. This means that DAFNE alumni are less likely to be admitted to hospital with serious complications from being sick.”

Based on German principles and developed in the UK, DAFNE programs for people with type 1 diabetes were introduced in Australia in 2005. “The OzDAFNE program takes away a lot of the guesswork involved in managing type 1 diabetes. Participants learn to estimate the carbohydrate content of the food they wish to eat. They then match this with the appropriate insulin dose,” Ms Collins says. “The program gives people living with type 1 diabetes more freedom and at the same time improves their health and quality of life.”

After having lived with diabetes for more than 60 years, Heather Gannon considered herself a type 1 diabetes expert. Though she had never consulted a diabetes educator, she was used to her fixed insulin doses and accepted that managing type 1 diabetes was not very flexible. But when someone convinced Ms Gannon to attend an OzDAFNE program everything changed.

“I was quite anxious before I went,” Ms Gannon says. In OzDAFNE I learnt how to measure carbohydrates and how to adjust my insulin for food and exercise. I also learnt the process to work out the dose of the long acting insulin and lots of little things, like what makes my blood glucose levels go high. I couldn’t believe how much flexibility I had. It was challenging but it’s the best thing I’ve ever done. It’s so wonderful to be able to manage your own diabetes yourself. Now I can do it, I’m confident.”

We support, empower and campaign for all Victorians affected by diabetes.

For more information:

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¹ Walker et al (2018): Short Report: Educational and Psychological Aspects Structured education using Dose Adjustment for Normal Eating (DAFNE) reduces long-term HbA_{1c} and HBA_{1c} variability.
<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/epdf/10.1111/dme.13621>



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About OzDAFNE:

- OzDAFNE programs are run in small groups of 6 to 8 people and run over the course of five days.
- An OzDAFNE trained dietitian and diabetes nurse educator run the program.
- Centres across Australia charge different costs. Please call 03 9667 1719 or find your local centre at: dafne.org.au
- Diabetes Victoria is funded by the National Diabetes Services Scheme (NDSS) to administer the OzDAFNE program. The NDSS is an initiative of the Australian Government administered with the assistance of Diabetes Australia. The NDSS Agent in Victoria is Diabetes Victoria.