

# STORIES OF HOPE

## Supporting Research for the Next Generation



*Delores Williams and her granddaughters Gracie and Chloe*

Delores Williams recounts the past 40 years like a living history of diabetes research. Diagnosed with type 1 diabetes at 18 in 1971, she started by testing the sugar content in her urine. Advances in technology and understanding brought a blood-glucose monitor, carb-counting knowledge, an insulin pump and, most recently, a continuous glucose monitor.

Research has given her technology and techniques, and working 32 years in a doctor's office taught her the importance of using those tools to manage her diabetes.

"Working in the medical field at an early age was a plus," says Williams of Lexington, Tenn. "While typing medical transcriptions, I witnessed the consequences for people with diabetes. There are so many deadly complications if you don't take care of yourself."

Diligence – checking her blood glucose four and five times a day and eating the right foods – has kept Williams healthy.

"It's a tough disease, but it shouldn't keep you from doing whatever you want to do," she says. "It's like walking on a tightrope. You have to keep your balance. If you fall off, you get up and do it again. You have to take control of it or it will take control of you."

Williams avoided complications until developing hypoglycemic unawareness, when her body stopped sending signals that her blood glucose was falling dangerously low.

"It's scary. I don't get symptoms anymore," says Williams. She started testing her blood glucose before driving. Other times, she could be ambushed – like the day she fell and struck her head on a ceramic floor. Her husband heard and found her unresponsive. She received stitches and stayed overnight in the hospital. Now the continuous glucose monitor keeps her safe by beeping when her blood glucose strays outside a set range.

Knowing the benefits of research, Williams donates to the American Diabetes Association, buys merchandise from the Gift of Hope program and encourages others to support the Association.

"No one deserves this disease, and it is spreading like wildfire," Williams says. "I can't stand to see children suffering with it all their lives. I would love to see a cure for the little ones." ▲

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