

Making a Difference in Diabetes

Q&A with [Dr. Steven Hodak](#), Director of the Center for Diabetes and Endocrinology

It's been reported that about a third of the 28 million Americans with type 2 diabetes don't know they have it. How is that possible?

Dr. Hodak: That's the problem with type 2 diabetes—it's a stealthy disease. It takes years to develop and often has no symptoms at all. When your body doesn't produce enough insulin, or it become resistant to insulin, sugar starts to accumulate in your blood. You might not feel anything at first. But it does affect your health, and it can lead to complications such as kidney damage, loss of vision, and even amputations.

Who's most at risk, and can you do anything to stop the disease from progressing?

Dr. Hodak: The good news is that you can do something about it. That's why it's so important for those at high risk—anyone who is overweight; has a sibling, parent, or grandparent with the disease; or is over age 65—to get their blood sugar levels checked. Eating carefully and maintaining a healthy weight can limit the accumulation of blood sugar, reverse the symptoms of the disease, and delay or prevent complications. Small steps work, but you have to stick with them.

What about medication for diabetes?

Dr. Hodak: Medication can help, too, but it's not enough to just take a pill. You've still got to make major lifestyle changes. It is doable! Patients on medication for diabetes who lose as little as 10 to 15 percent of their body weight usually have markedly improved blood sugar levels. Many of them can



Contact: To find a doctor to treat or help prevent diabetes, call the Center for Diabetes and Endocrinology at 212-481-1350.

Photographer: Joshua Bright

significantly decrease or even discontinue their medications. But they've got to stick with it for life. I know that can be hard, but there's usually no sign of a spike in blood sugar, so the consequences of "cheating" tend to be cumulative rather than immediate. That's why regular self-testing is vitally important.

How can people who have diabetes get help and motivation?

Dr. Hodak: Our new Center for Diabetes and Endocrinology has a talented team of endocrinologists, diabetes educators, nutritionists, mental health specialists, and fitness instructors. They work together to provide all the expertise and services you need. ■

A Tender Lullaby

For a Young Patient, Music Therapy in the OR Ensures a Soothing Journey



Photographer: Joshua Bright

As a member of the [Sala Institute for Child and Family Centered Care](#) within the [Hassenfeld Children's Hospital](#), music therapist Joseph Lee can usually be found strumming his guitar and singing songs to young patients in various units of NYU Langone Medical Center, engaging and

distracting them as they undergo sometimes painful medical treatments or procedures. One day last summer, however, Lee was called upon to use his therapeutic musical skills in an unusual setting: one of [Tisch Hospital's](#) operating rooms.

The patient was a five-year-old boy who suffers from developmental delays, which make him easily agitated. In the preop unit, Lee quickly discovered that the sound of his guitar was overstimulating for the little boy, so he turned instead to the gentle plinking of a digital piano on his iPad. He also took cues from the boy's parents and from the boy's grandmother, who helped lead nearly an hour of comforting music as the boy was prepped for his eye surgery. Song after song, the boy remained engaged, expressing his likes and dislikes as the music played on.

"This child has always had a dramatic response to song," explains the boy's surgeon, pediatric ophthalmologist [Emily Ceisler, MD](#), who has treated him since infancy. "I will do whatever I can to make a child happier, which helps me to better examine and treat him."

So Dr. Ceisler and anesthesiologist [Joanna Koenigsberg, MD](#), were delighted to have Lee keep singing to the little boy as he was wheeled into the OR, right up until the moment he drifted off to sleep. Swept up in the spirit of the moment, Dr. Ceisler, Dr. Koenigsberg, and the entire OR team joined in as Lee sang "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star." When the little boy came to in the postanesthesia care unit, he awoke just as he had fallen asleep—to the sounds he loves and the smiles of those who love him. ■