



Grist Family Completes 100 Mile Bike Ride

Special feature from DiabetesandSports.com

Jeanne and Tom Grist are 45 and 44, respectively. They have 5 children, James, 15, Colin 13, Thomas 11, Ryan 9, and Tierney 6. Needless to say, their lives were busy even before their son Colin was diagnosed with diabetes 18 months ago. Colin originally was treated with insulin

injections, then switched to using the Minimed Paradigm insulin pump about 9 months ago. Jeanne, Tom and Colin committed themselves to doing a century (100 miles) bike ride and successfully completed it. It was a learning experience for all three, but more importantly a rewarding one for Colin.

Diabetes and Sports: Why in the world would you two consider taking Colin, your 13 year old with diabetes, on a 100 mile bike ride?

Jeanne Grist: We decided that it would be a good challenge for Colin to ride 50 miles. It turned into a 100 mile ride when Colin became excited about it. Colin is not a big "ball sports" kind of boy. He likes solo sports and biking seemed like a natural. He was not highly motivated at first, however. That took a bit of effort and very positive feedback for a while. It was a gamble but it was worth it.

Diabetes and Sports: Did you ever feel he couldn't do such a long event with diabetes to handle?

Jeanne Grist: Honestly, I never really thought it would be that hard with diabetes because we were just going for 50 miles. We had cross country skied with him and gone on long hikes in the mountains. However, this did turn out to be a bit more challenging. We began to turn down the pump, (with your advice), before a long ride. He always carried candy with him for support along the ride. I would ride with him, in the beginning and then he started going on training rides by himself or with his brother, James. I did worry that he might have low blood sugar but I also figured we could keep giving him food along the way. I knew he was very strong willed and if he set out to do it he could finish the ride. Colin says that he did question the length of the ride because it would be physically challenging. He left the diabetic worries to us. He was happy to be doing something fun and physical.

Diabetes and Sports: What was the biggest challenge Colin felt while training for the event?

Jeanne Grist: The biggest challenge was just getting out the door, consistently, and putting in the scheduled miles. He also needed little reminders of checking his blood sugar, take a snack and the cell phone. Eventually, he did not need any reminders.

Diabetes and Sports: How about you two as parents?

Jeanne Grist: Time was a big challenge. That both of us were doing this and Colin who rode at a different pace than us. We both learned to be more patient and positive.

Diabetes and Sports: Was exercise any part of your lives before committing yourself to riding a century bike ride?

Jeanne Grist: Yes, both Tom and I had been runners for years and have done a marathon or two. We both have done the American Birkebeiner five times so we were familiar with long distant training. However, bike riding distances was new to me. My helping Colin was a different

experience than Tom's. I was learning how to ride also, Tom already was a seasoned bike rider. We did 10 mile hikes and 25 mile bike rides with the kids but never more than that.

Diabetes and Sports: Colin, now that you have successfully ridden a century ride, how has that changed you?

Colin Grist: I feel more confident and proud of myself. I feel that I know my body better and how I can challenge it. I learned that it feels good to be in shape for a long ride and it is fun. I learned that I do get lower readings with exercise and I have to check myself more. I liked being able to handle my diabetes. I would be happy to help someone else try to do an event like this. Lots of people helped me and encouraged me. I'd be happy to help others.

Diabetes and Sports: What do your siblings and friends think of your accomplishment?

Colin Grist: My brothers and sister were so proud of me. They decorated the house and told me how great it was. They supported me when I had to go out on training rides also. My friends were very excited for me and proud of me also. They thought it was really great that I did this.

Diabetes and Sports: Did you ever have doubts while training that you might not make your goal?

Colin Grist: Yes, there were days that I did not want to ride anymore. I got tired of it and began to doubt that I could do this ride. My parents encouraged me along and talked me back into it. Sometimes I just reminded myself why I was doing this and that it was good for me. When it was windy and hot I just wanted to quit and worried that it would be that way for the big ride. Again, my parents helped me by reminding me that I really did want to do this, and how proud of myself I would feel.

Diabetes and Sports: What advice would you give parents who might be thinking of involving their diabetic child in an endurance event?

Jeanne Grist: I would tell them to go for it. It made us feel so proud of Colin and of ourselves for helping him. There were times it was hard and he did not want to do it anymore, that we learned a great deal about ourselves and about Colin. We did watch his blood sugars more carefully and let him have special treats on days that he rode a long distance. Overall, it was a great bonding, learning and physical event.

Diabetes and Sports: Thank you Grist, and congratulations!

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