



Diabetes Terms of Endearment

Real life terms about real life with diabetes



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When you think “chronic disease,” you don’t exactly think slap-stick humor. More like ketone-stick horrors. There is nothing funny about kidney disease or diabetic retinopathy. Testing blood glucose levels, counting carbohydrates, and keeping track of medications - all the daily tasks of diabetes care can become overwhelming, making it tough to find the humor in diabetes.

Which is exactly why we need to find the humor in diabetes.

This disease takes up so much of our time. There are very few moments in the day when I’m not at least considering my diabetes. And while I am not ruled by my condition, in order to survive and live a wonderful life, I need to focus on the details of diabetes to maintain good health. I need to maintain good mental health, too.

My grandmother used to tell me that laughter is food for the soul. My endocrinologist used to tell me that laughter is the way to achieve balance. Even Readers’ Digest told me “Laughter is the Best Medicine.” This is true for people with diabetes, as well as people with other chronic illnesses.

There are phrases that other people aren’t able to toss around so lightly. The phrase, “I feel so high,” has a definitive meaning to a person with diabetes, but may raise the eyebrows of those who aren’t “in the know.” Out of the context of diabetes, those words aren’t normally thrown around at dinner parties. But they are used here in our diabetes community. People living with and caring for diabetes have their own special language; it’s a language that includes terms like “no-hitter” and “tsunami” that people without diabetes wouldn’t understand, but those with it nod their heads and say “Yup. Same here.” This “diabetes terms of endearment” dictionary is compiled from input from the fabulous diabetes community and is definitely a collaborative effort.

There are also the moments that you laugh because, if you don’t, you may burst into tears. The difficult moments sometimes feel tough enough to break you in two. But sometimes a laugh bubbles up from deep inside you, where you are the most scared and the most vulnerable, and it escapes. It gives you strength. It helps chase the fear away for a few minutes.

When diabetes gets a little tough, it’s hard to find that silver lining. Laughter has a way of illuminating it.

Enjoy the Diabetes Terms of Endearment!! I hope they make you smile.

Kerri Sparling
www.SixUntilMe.com

A **A1C twins:** Two PWDs having the same A1C within the same week of endo appts.

“Are You Unplugged?”: How to intimately ask if your partner has unhooked his/her pump site. A way of subtly asking if it’s sexy time.

Ass: The fast acting insulin Danielle’s family uses is called Novo-rapid or Aspart. They use the term Aspart mostly because that is what their endocrinologist calls it. Admittedly, they have gotten into the bad habit of calling it “ass.” *ex. “Hmmm, Danielle’s sugars are too high - should I give her some ass?”*

B **Baby Bear Number:** When your number is in target, or juuuuuust right. *ex. “It’s almost time for lunch, go ahead and do a stick. What’d you get? Hey, great, you’re Baby Bear!”*

Basaling: The act or process of working out kinks in the basal rates. *ex. “I was up half the night basaling.” or “We’re skipping breakfast today because we’re basaling.”*

Bat Belt: The belt of a PWD (person with diabetes) who has all their diabetic accoutrements worn about their waist. May include insulin pump, Dexcom receiver, and that grappling hook thing Batman uses to climb over buildings.

Bear Fingers: When a finger has been tested to the point of exhaustion and it needs to be rested or “hibernated.”

Beedies: Expression used to refer to diabetes, usually spoken in the voice of an old man. **See also:** “Diabetes.” *ex. “I gots the BEEDIES!”*

Beeg: The spoken version of the abbreviation “BG” (for “blood glucose”). *ex. “I’m checking my beeg!”*

Bionic parts: A method of referring to diabetes technology instruments. These items are often found on the aforementioned “Bat Belt.”

Bloodletting: Not using perfectly good blood from a cut from a knife or other household item for a glucose test because you recently tested.

Blood Suckers: Collective term for test strips, blood drawing devices, and vampire cannulas.

Bolus-worthy: Food that is enticing enough that we’d take a ton insulin for it, despite any blood sugar results. *ex. “That chocolate-covered cupcake looks bolus-worthy.”*

Bouncing: When your bloodsugar drops so low overnight that your liver kicks in some glucagon, causing your bloodsugar to bounce from low to high.

Born Again Diabetic: When a person with diabetes fosters a new-found interest in taking care of their health after years of negligence and denial.

BS-brain: aka “Blood sugar brain,” the fog, agitation that seems to last all day and affects everything after a bad low or high blood sugar.

Buddy Batteries: AAA Energizer pump batteries solely reserved for use in diabetes devices. A lack of Buddy Batteries may result in an incident of D-Postal.

C **Carbage:** Term indicative of the collective carbohydrate content in an item, rhymes with “garbage.” *ex.* “What’s the carbage on that bagel?”

Carbonese: The ability to determine the number of carbs in a given food based on the total carbs and the serving size (coined by a 6 year old child with diabetes who is fluent in Carbonese and can eyeball the carbs without her mother’s input).

Case of the Ms: When your continuous glucose monitor graph looks like giant M’s.
[Editor’s note: M’s or W’s.]

Case of the Shakies: A low blood sugar episode that causes shakiness.

CDD: aka “Crappy Diabetes Day”, when your blood sugar goes from 43 mg/dl in the morning, to 37 mg/dl an hour later, to 243 mg/dl at noon, to 321 mg/dl at 3 pm, back to 54 mg/dl at dinner, plus you might have an occlusion as well just to top things off. **See also: Gluco-coaster**

CCB: Crazy correction bolus. **See also:** “SWAG” or “Rage Bolus.”

Chaser: The bolus given when a PWD consumes a copious amount of food to treat a low blood sugar.

Cheap Date: Also known as “diabetics,” as we don’t normally order dessert on dates.

Cheap Shot: Inferior insulin brand, probably distributed/sold by Undisclosed Huge Discount Stores Whose Names May Rhyme With Tall-Fart.

Checka: A cuter way to reference a blood sugar check. *ex.* “Time to checka your blood, mommy?”

Clocking In: Another term for “bloodsugar reading.” Synonyms include “ringing in” and “reading at.”

Cluster-Beep: When you have to pull every single device out, from cell phone to CGMs, to figure out which one is beeping, buzzing, or just being a general pain in the arse. (It also applies to having to pull the same device out twice in 30 seconds.)

Cramming: The act of over-eating to treat those pesky midnight low blood sugars. **See also:** “Sleep-Eating” or “Panic Eating.”

Creepy Fingers: A term Jillian’s sister uses for what over pricked fingers look like after a long swim in the summer, all pruned and holed and mangled.

CSI Dream: The blood stains on sheets and clothing from glucose tests.

Cured: Word often muttered under your breath when you end up low after precision-bolusing for a meal, as though your body didn’t need the insulin. *ex.* “I have no idea how I ended up low. I must be cured.”

D **D’Ambien experience:** One of those middle of the night lows where you can’t remember what you ate or drank, or how much, as well as any conversations you had.

D-Dumb: Term applied to people who just don’t “get” diabetes.

D-Mom/D-Mama: The mother of a kid with diabetes, taking the disease on as their own.
See also: Surrogate Pancreas.

D-Postal: The act of lashing out as a result of societal misunderstandings of diabetes. *ex. "You can't possibly understand how hard it is living with diabetes, so I'd advise you to step down before I start beating you with my pump and a fist full of glucose tabs."*

Daylight Savings Time: **See also:** "time to change the lancet."

Dead Strips: Used blood glucose meter strips found in random spots, i.e. under the seat of your car, on the floor at the gym, in a shoe, in a small gray kitten named Siah's mouth.

Diabadass: A PWD who does something awesome that non-badasses think diabetes should stop them from doing (e.g. having babies, biking across the country, playing in the NFL). Also known as: most members of the DOC.

Diabetonese: The language of managing this madness! **See also:** the Diabetes Terms of Endearment.

Diabuddy: A real life friend who also happens to have diabetes, too.

Dia-: (can be an adjective, noun or verb) A prefix applied to any word when diabetes impacts said word. Examples include "diafail," "diawin," and "diabadass." Often found as Twitter hashtags and in the Clara Barton Camp dining hall conversations. *ex. "I can't believe I forgot to bolus for the seven pancakes I ate for breakfast ... diafail!"*

Diabetes Medicine: What Shannon calls juice boxes so that her other kids don't clamor for one while she's treating her son's low blood sugar. **See also:** **It's Her Medicine.**

Diabetes Police: Any non-diabetic who feels it is their job to give their opinion on what we should eat. Note that it's never a question - always an imperative statement. *Classic ex. "You can't eat this - you have diabetes."*

Diabetic PMS: When the blood sugar rockets up for no apparent reason for the 2-3 days prior to the start of a woman's cycle. Men may also experience this in a sympathetic mode.

Diabetus: Wilford Brimley's preferred pronunciation of the word "diabetes." Usually followed by laughter and the viewing of YouTube clips. *ex. "Hi. Are you using Liberty Medical to get your diabetus medications?"*

Diablandic: Sugar-free or diabetes marketed food that tastes horribly bland. *ex: Girl Scout Sugar-Free Brownies.*

Diazon: A female with T1DM who is also active in the DOC, is on top of her diabetes game, and is successful IRL. Credit: Kelly Kunik

Dial in: The act of taking a bolus with an insulin pump. *ex. "Dial in for that panini."* Note: this expression does not make sense, as there is no dial on an insulin pump, but that reasoning makes me like it even more.

Diascret: Those diabetes-related secrets that you have never told anyone.

Diaversary: The anniversary of your diagnoses date, aka the time you stick it to diabetes no matter what the blood glucose number is. *ex "We're having cake for dessert to celebrate your diaversary. You're 250? Then we'll just have to bolus extra."*

Dead Bees: Term given to diabetes by the classmate of a small child. *ex. "He needs juice because he has dead bees."*

Disco Boobs: When a pump is hidden between a PWDs breasts, that moment of when it lights up and starts beeping, giving the chest area a look not unlike a disco ball. **See also:** **Iron Man**

DOS Bag: aka “The D-Oh-Sh*t bag,” the bag where a PWD carries around all of their emergency supplies (it goes everywhere) - extra infusion sets, insulin, extra strips, back up meter, juice, tabs, Glucagon, etc.

Dotties: When you prick your finger, squeeze, and about five holes show up with blood. **See also: Bloody Constellation.**

Double Downing: When your continuous glucose monitor graph has two down arrows, telling you you’re dropping fast.

Double Rainbow Day: Means a line on the continuous glucose monitor that is inexplicably good and deserves ecstatic celebration. **See also: What does it MEAN?**

DSMA: aka #dsma aka Diabetes Social Media Advocacy. Refers to a Twitter chat that takes place every Wednesday night at 9 pm ET, where members of the diabetes online community talk about diabetes lifestyle issues.

E **E.T.:** When your pump is still lit up inside your shirt

Exercise: Any form of physical activity, which most often effects blood sugar levels directly. Such activities that may affect blood sugars include running, tennis, shopping, sexy moments, parking your car, lifting a pencil, and sometimes just the mere thought of exercise.

F **Flatlining:** When your blood sugar is holding steady as seen on a continuous glucose monitor graph. **See also: No-Hitter**

Flicked: Or “to flick” - When an infusion set is nudged or grazed by a doorknob, child’s foot, random cat paw, etc.

Frankenbutt: When an old pump site is on the left side of your backside and you place the new one on the right, leaving the bum looking like Frankenstein’s neck with the bolts sticking out.

Free Shower Day: Taking a shower on the day that your infusion set and/or CGM sensor are being swapped out, leaving your skin site-free.

G **“Get The Machine!”:** Can be said to anyone who is already familiar with your diabetes and has done something to make their finger bleed out a drop, i.e. a papercut, sewing needle prick, small scale kitchen knife or razor incident, etc.

“Give Mommy the Finger.”: A phrase often used by parents of children with diabetes, referring to a parent’s request to test their child’s blood sugar. Often met by amused stares from strangers.

Gluc-over: Diabetic version of a hangover. Is the after-affect of a bad late night low. Most often includes headaches and a bad taste of old orange juice and decaying glucose in your mouth. Cracker and candy wrappers and empty containers of food are often found lying around the person who is having the glucover. Most remedies include: brushing of the teeth, heavy applications of makeup to remove bags under eyes, Tylenol, and healthy binge eating.

Glucocoaster: A crazy CGM graph. Antonym: no-hitter

Glucose Goblins: The fiendish critters that make our blood sugars high after an insulin set change. *ex. “I changed my site, didn’t eat anything, and still ended up at 250 mg/dl. Damn glucose goblins.”*

Gusher: When you prick your finger, squeeze, and end up assaulted by your own bloodstream. May also be found when you remove an infusion set.

H

H.A.B.: Huge Ass Bolus, usually taken in conjunction with huge ass meal.

Hans n' Franz: To change one's infusion set, to get "pumped up."

Hard Low: There is a low and then there is a HARD LOW. Most often coupled with standing with the refrigerator door open, eating the majority of a pound cake, and washing it down with half a bottle of grape juice. Often followed by a **Chaser**.

"Have You Checked Your Checkins?": Phrase used by Seonaid's father, which means "Have you checked your sugar?" [Editor's Note: It made me laugh out loud, so I wanted to make sure it made it to the list.]

Hooked: When going about normal, everyday life and an inanimate object jumps out and grabs at an infusion set tubing, resulting in pain and/or cursing and/or the pulling out of said infusion set.

Interstate BG Checks: Where upon the diabetic (while barreling down the interstate above the speed limit) juggles the steering wheel, BG meter, test strip, lancet and a target finger. Commonly occurs in the dark. *ex. "I didn't feel quite right when I was driving home from my interview, so I performed an interstate BG check and almost hit a moose."*

Insulate: The act of taking insulin. *ex. "Have you insulated yet - it's almost dinner time."*

Insulin-Mama: The name my family calls me since my daughter regularly follows me through the house carrying crackers in her hand, saying "Insulin, Mama!"

Insulint: The act of exhibiting a bad attitude, while also being diabetic.

"It's Her Medicine.": A phrase used by a friend once, when her date wanted to eat the emergency crackers I had in my purse. "Can I have a cracker, Kerri?" Before I could answer, friend leaned in with a knowing look and said, "No, it's not a cracker. It's her medicine."

L

Larry Bird: Boston Celtic's basketball legend, jersey no. 33. Serves as cardio workout goal time inspiration for many diabetics. Often found at the punch line of many of my sad little quips. *ex. "Working out at the gym, I made sure to do Larry Bird on the treadmill."*

Lazy River Ride: An in-target CGM graph. **See also:** flat-liner and no-hitter

Leaning: The act of standing quietly while low trying to hide a low blood sugar "lean" and someone notices you slightly tipping over.

Leash: Pump tubing. *ex. "I walked by the doorknob and it grabbed me by the leash."*

Liver Dump: When your blood glucose rebounds after a hard low (usually one in the 40s or below) *ex. "Hey, Mr. Liver ... thanks for the help, but it is a little too much and a little too late."*

Low Bowl: The bowl in the kitchen of a diabetic filled to the rim with 5-15g fast acting carb treats. Miniature versions are often found in diaper bags for "On The Go" lows.

M

Make a Ladybug: To form that giant drop of blood that the old glucose meters used to require.

Morning Boost: Refers to drinking coffee and the subsequent blood glucose spike the caffeine offers up.

Mother-Birding: When the parent of a child with diabetes feeds their CWD glucose tabs or a sugar source.

Multiple Choice: When you don't even need to use a lancet to test because you can simply squeeze your fingertip and have blood come out of several previous lancing.

N

Nabs: Crackers with peanut butter spread between them. Typically used to follow up glucose tabs in the treatment of a low bloodsugar. Names derived from the Latin "Nabisco", the maker of the most popular peanut butter crackers. Most diabetics learn about nabs at diabetes camp.

No-Hitter: A time period in which a diabetic does not hit their high or low threshold on their CGM. For a Dexcom user, they must be without any alarms during the entire day, and the day must be at least 24 hours. A diabetic who prevents their blood sugars from reaching a threshold is said to have "bolused a no-hitter."

No-No Cupboard: Where you (or your mom) keeps all your diabetes snacks that are off limits to others.

Non-Carbonated: Foods that do not have any carbohydrates. Also known as "free foods."
ex. Jell-O, pickles, air

"Not A Toy": Phrase used to explain to a young child why they can't grab your insulin pump or testing meter and run off with it. *ex. "No, Abby, that's not a toy."*

Number: The glucose reading on the meter. The word "number" no longer refers to a phone number, jersey number, or the number you're holding in line at the deli counter.

O

Officially Scary: Applies to situations, numbers, etc. Defined as any statistic that stretches the perimeters of safety. *ex. "While at the gym, I checked at the 33 Larry Bird minute mark and noted that I was at the Officially Scary Number of 37 mg/dl!"*

Old School Shot: Reverting back to injecting insulin via syringe after becoming used to bolusing with an insulin pump. May also be known as "rockin' it old school" or "shootin' old school."

"Oh Donuts": Phrase used by Michelle and her son as the preferred curse word to utter after seeing a high blood sugar reading. Origin: Started after they consumed donuts and her son said "Oh donuts mumma." She responded "Exactly."

On the Rise: When you're blood sugar has been low for so long, and then FINALLY shows signs of coming back up. *ex. "72. Thank goodness! I'm on the rise!"*

P

Panicky Diabetic Syndrome: The use of more than five test strips in a 55 minute period because you aren't confident that your bloodsugar is coming up or down. Often accompanied by a Rage or Serial Bolus.

Poker: Lancing device, also known as a "pokey."

Pump Envy: The feeling of T2/1'ers who are taking insulin injections 4+ times per day but do not qualify to receive a pump due to insurance issues or having a MiniMed or Animas or whatever-brand but coveting another brand or newer model.

Pump-It-Up: What to do when you see a dessert that you just can't resist (while simultaneously doing the raise-the-roof gesture).

R **Random Bolus:** The method of bolusing at random and mildly calculated intervals, i.e. realizing that you may have under-bolused for a meal and opt to course in a unit or two to cover bases.

Rage Bolus: The act of suffering from a high bloodsugar for an extended period of time or for an unknown reason and the retaliatory insulin dose. Oftentimes results in a low bloodsugar.

Real People Sick: The differentiation between bloodsugar issues and the common cold. Phrase slips out most often when the diabetic admits to not feeling well and must specify that it is not bloodsugar related.

Red Gold: After pricking your finger, blood comes out in geyser-like spurts instead of forming a droplet.

Regan-Rage: Coined by Nicole P's boyfriend; Term comes from the little girl in the Exorcist. Describes the behavior some diabetics exhibit when having a low bloodsugar. Regan-rage behaviors include swearing, screaming, spitting of juice, and stretching body parts in unnatural ways. Does not include levitating. If your diabetic friend/partner/child should levitate, it is probably not caused by low bloodsugar. *ex. "Nicole was in a Regan-rage, spitting the juice all over our bedroom walls and cussing like a sailor."*

S **SDD:** aka "Shitty Diabetes Day." May include any of and more than the following: feeling terrible due to blood sugar fluctuations, running out of low blood sugar treatment methods, needing to skip exercise due to blood sugar issues, and any and all instances that lend towards a "Diabetes: 1; Me: 0" day.

Serial Bolus: Administering bolus upon bolus to bring a bloodsugar down. Often likened to a Rage Bolus, but usually follows the course of multiple hours vs. one huge crank up.

Sleep-Drinking: The ability to consume juice while still actually asleep.

Sleep-Eating: The act of rising from a sound sleep, proceeding to the kitchen and eating anything you can find. A diabetic often wakes up while in the process of sleep-eating without being able to figure out how they got to the kitchen or why there is ice cream all over their fingers and face. *ex. "Last night, my boyfriend found me sleep-eating again; when he was able to rouse me, I was mortified to find I had eaten a ½ gallon of chocolate ice cream."*

Shooting Up: The act of taking an insulin injection. This expression is most often noticed in public by uneducated bystanders who look over and raise an eyebrow. **See also:** "I'm high."

Stick: When 'blood sugar test' gets to be a mouthful.

Sugar Baby: A name to call someone with diabetes, such as your daughter.

Sugar Bloods: A more fun way to say blood sugar. (especially with a southern accent)

Sugar Boogers: Little gummy candies that Lea's son Noah eats when low.

Sugar Buddies: When you and another both have diabetes. **See also:** Diabuddies

Sugar Reaper: A night time hypo that nearly kills you. *ex. "I had a visit from the Sugar Reaper last night, which explains the bags under my eyes and the juice stains around my mouth."*

Sugar-Soil: When you get sugar on your fingers after treating a low, which results in a falsely high re-check. Also known as: Wash your hands.

Sugar Shy: The act of diabetes nondisclosure, aka not telling anyone that you're diabetic.

S.W.A.G. Bolus: Scientific, Wild Assed Guess bolus. This is where you use more instinct than data to bolus an unexpected or uncalculated meal.

Sweaters: The furry, sticky feeling your teeth may get when your blood sugar is high. *ex. "I was almost 400 mg/dl, and I definitely had sweaters on my teeth."*

T **Time to Change the Lancet:** Defined as any time when you change the batteries in your smoke detector, reset your clocks, or when the lancet starts to rust.

Third Nipple: the little protusion from an infusion set when a shirt is pressed around the site *ex. "Does this shirt look good?" "Yes, but I can totally see your third nipple clear through it."*

3 am Break: For couples where one partner has diabetes, this refers to 3 am low blood sugars, wherein one person drinks juice and the other goes to pee.

Tsunami: A result of over treating a serious low blood sugar. *ex. "Blood sugar at 38 mg/dl, can't hardly walk, grab the quart of OJ, not following the 15 rule. Result: two hours later a Tsunami blood sugar of 300 mg/dl."*

Twilight Zone High: A high with no rational cause. *ex. Despite the fact that I had not eaten anything sweet or missed any insulin, I clocked in at a Twilight Zone High of 430 mg/dl*

V **Vampire Cannula:** An insulin pump plastic cannula that has sucked up blood and refuses to push out the appropriate insulin dose.

Venom: What spews from our mouths when our blood sugar is off the charts high and we are less than sweet

W **"What's off Limits?":** How to intimately ask where your partner's pump site/continuous glucose monitor are located on the body

Winter Muted: When a pump or continuous glucose monitor is concealed under so many layers of clothes, its beeps are inaudible

Woodchuck: Safe word for "check your sugar" if you're acting bitchy during a low blood sugar moment. [Editor's note: Sounds like it could be "Wood-ya-chuck your blood sugar?" PUNS!]

Y **YDMV:** "Your diabetes may vary." Phrase used as a caveat after explaining how something affects your diabetes. *ex. "Pizza makes my blood sugar spike, but ydmv."*

Z **Zombied:** Fingers that are too cold to get any blood out of them. Most easily remedied by sucking on them or rubbing them against your clothes to get the blood flowing.



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2011. Contributions from the Diabetes Online Community; editorial assistance from Abby Bayer, RN; illustration by Kim Vlasnik; design by Meredith Gruebbel.