

PATIENT ARTICLE

My name is Daisy Burrell and I am a patient with multiple chronic diseases. One must understand that chronic means its long term and more than likely...going to last your lifetime. My conditions are diabetes, high blood pressure, and I have muscle and nerve pain. Diabetes is the illness that concerns me the most. I want desperately to control it without having to sacrifice so much. A large part of that depends upon me and what I do, such as what I eat and how I exercise. I remember when my doctor put me on insulin, about the 4th year after my diagnosis, I thought I could eat whatever I wanted as long as I counteracted it with a dose of insulin. Sometimes that mindset becomes my current status but that shouldn't happen. Understand that taking insulin means that your chronic disease has reached a level which requires more to keep your blood sugar at the recommended level. I now understand that taking insulin means I've gotten a step closer to the ills of diabetes such as amputation, neuropathy or blindness. I've learned these things, by doing research on my own and talking to diabetics, some who have undergone amputation. They have the same disease I have and truth be told, the same fate could become my own. In my 10 years of living with diabetes and on my fourth primary care physician, I can't recall any of my medical team explaining the important things I needed to know about diabetes. Most of it has been "take this medication and it should get better" mentality. I have learned a lot and even though I don't always do what's best for me, I am more saddened by those patients who know even less than I. I remember talking to a lady in church who shared she had diabetes for over 20 years. When I asked what was her A1C, she replied "what's that"? I was stunned that she didn't know about A1C, what it measured or how it could help her to control her diabetes. I now ask that question to a lot of diabetes patients that I encounter, and it's surprising how many don't know. I always speak of its importance, and ask them to talk to their doctor about this. I pray I have helped in a small way. A most devastating experience for me was to literally witness a friend at the age of 62 die of diabetes simply because of not knowing how to manage taking insulin. That's a story for a different day. What is important is finding a way to educate diabetics on this life threatening disease and how to take control over it and not let it control you. I anxiously await this mobile app and the knowledge it will provide. The opportunity to access much needed and helpful information involving diabetes, hypertension, and other chronic illnesses that kill when certain chronic diseases need not be a death sentence.