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Wednesday, 11/14/07

## Clinical study is part of life with diabetes

*Some get placebo, but research helps all with disease*

By ANNE PAINE  
Staff Writer

Three-year-old Oliver Gould takes a pill every morning. He usually gets a sucker in return for the imposition.

The pill — as much a part of his day as breakfast — could be worthless.

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Oliver is part of a research project, and he might or might not be getting the small dose of insulin scientists believe could help him and other children who are likely to develop what is called type 1 diabetes.

Results of an earlier study show taking insulin could delay the onset of the disease by more than four years.

Being part of such a study means some participants are getting a placebo.

"I pray he's getting insulin," said his father, Dave Gould, vice president of advertising at *The Tennessean*.

Gould and wife Ellen have eight children; Patrick, 15, Sam, 10, and Sarah, 8, have diabetes.



Oliver Gould, 3, shown with his mother, Ellen, is taking part in a diabetes study. (COURTESY OF SUSAN URMY)

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Type 1 diabetes, a highly inheritable disease, often shows up in childhood or adolescence. With it, a person's immune cells destroy the cells in the pancreas that produce the hormone insulin, which turns sugar, starches and other food into energy. People ages 45 and younger who have a relative with type 1 diabetes can apply for the research project at Vanderbilt. To learn more, call 936-8638.

Contact Anne Paine at 259-8071 or

They prick their fingers before each meal to test blood sugar levels. Two of them take shots — sometimes from each other or another sibling — after meals. Patrick uses an implanted device through which insulin can be pumped as needed.

Sam and Sarah get a fourth shot before bed. All three have to watch what they eat and determine the right amount of insulin with each shot.

"Diabetes dominates our lives," their father said. "It dominates the lives of our children. We have to be thinking about it all the time."

Andrew, 13, Nicholas 12, and Annie, 2, have tested negative so far for the antibodies that would indicate that they are developing type 1 diabetes. Maggie will be checked in six months, when she's a year old.

Oliver, however, carries the telltale signs that diabetes could be developing.

Dave Gould prays that his child is getting the real pill in the study, but he looks to the bigger picture.

"That's the way science and research works," he said. "If he is getting a placebo, that means another child is getting the insulin pill, and maybe another child can delay or avoid diabetes as a result."

His kids and others are surviving and leading better lives because of studies others have taken part in, he said.

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