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Free test could help spot risk of diabetes

By STACY SMITH SEGOVIA
Gannett Tennessee

If your mother, father, brother, sister or child has Type 1 diabetes, you can be tested at no cost to see if you have the antibodies that make you likely to develop the disease.

"If you have a first-degree relative with Type 1 diabetes, your risk of developing Type 1 goes from 1 in 250 to 1 in 20," says Dr. Bill Russell, director of pediatric endocrinology at the Monroe Carell Jr. Children's Hospital at Vanderbilt.

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If you are under age 21 and have a close relative, such as a cousin or uncle, who has

Type 1 diabetes, you, too, can be tested for free at Vanderbilt.

Vanderbilt is participating in a \$1.14 billion international study called TrialNet, paid for by the National Institutes of Health.

The study is aimed at finding a way to prevent or delay the onset of Type 1 diabetes. People whose blood screenings show them likely to develop the disease can enroll in the TrialNet study of oral insulin as a potential diabetes preventative.

Although Type 1 diabetes is controllable with daily insulin injections, preventing it would be an enormous boon to human health.

Years of sugar highs and lows can lead to devastating effects among those who have Type 1 diabetes, such as blindness, kidney failure and lower limb amputations.

Carole Bartoo, a nurse and senior information officer at the children's hospital, says many more participants are needed. The Vanderbilt research team has a goal of screening 50 people each month, and it anticipates placing five or six people with the highest risk of developing diabetes — likely children — in the oral insulin trial each year.

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- To ask about being screened in the Type 1 diabetes prevention trial, contact Margo Black at the Vanderbilt Eskin Diabetes TrialNet Research Office at 615-936-8638 or toll-free 1-888-884-8638 or send an e-mail to diabetesresearch@vanderbilt.edu.

- For more information about TrialNet online, go to <http://www.diabetestrialnet.org/>.

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