

The Telegram THE PEOPLE'S PAPER

Man no longer a diabetic after kidney, pancreas transplant

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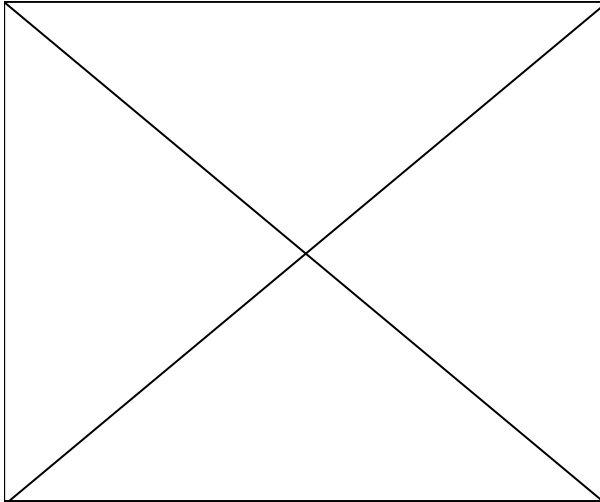
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Sitting in his dining room, Graham Adams looks at his insulin pen and other necessities required to treat diabetes.



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After an extremely rare double transplant earlier this year, Graham Adams of Roddickton-Bide Arm is no longer a diabetic. With his insulin pen and other necessities to treat diabetes next to him, Adams is happy to proclaim he no longer needs them.



With a big smile on his face, he happily proclaims he no longer needs them.

After 36 years as a diabetic, the Roddickton resident underwent an extremely rare double transplant to receive a new kidney and pancreas earlier this year, ridding him of the horrible disease.

Adams is now on the mend and is diabetes-free, but it was a long and bumpy road getting to where he is today.

It all started in 1979. He was eight years old when he was diagnosed as a Type 1 insulin-dependent diabetic.

For the last 22 years, Adams has taken five needles a day.

As he got older, the debilitating disease started presenting problems. In 2000, Adams was losing sight in one of his eyes, and in 2001 he was experiencing kidney problems.

It resulted in him having massive kidney failure in 2012 and having to go on dialysis.

He would take treatments three times a week in St. Anthony for the first year.

“Travel is a major issue for anyone who has to go on dialysis,” he said. “With moose on the roads and bad weather, it makes getting to treatments hard.”

Moving to Corner Brook in 2013, he carried out the remainder of his dialysis treatments.

But not wanting to be dependent on machinery for the rest of his life, Adams decided to try for a pancreas and kidney transplant.

He started preparing himself for surgery in January 2013, and by July 3, 2014 he was placed on the transplant list.

“I was building myself up for a kidney and pancreas because I wanted to get rid of the problem,” he said. “It was a lot of extra testing and preparation to get to that point, but I was able to get clearance for both.”

On July 31, he received the call.

He was in Mainland, on the Port aux Port Peninsula, when he was informed that a pancreas was available.

“I said I would take it without the kidney, because I wanted to get rid of the diabetes,” he said.

Hours later, he was on a flight to Halifax, full of excitement, thinking about how a new chapter of his life was about to begin.

And while being prepped for surgery, he got even more good news.

“I was told the kidney they had was suitable for me, too,” he said. “So I ended up with a kidney and pancreas during the same operation.”

The double transplant was a six-hour surgery, and Adams came through it with flying colours.

“It was a pretty standard procedure from their perspective,” he said.

Three months has passed and Adams hasn’t taken a needle, which seems surreal to him.

“Diabetes was something that I always thought you had to live with the rest of your life because there’s no cure,” he said.

“I get up in the mornings, and I’m thinking about checking my sugars because it was such a routine part of my life, but I don’t have to do that anymore. It’s a completely new life.”

And Adams realizes that every time he has something to eat.

When he was a diabetic, he always had to check his sugars and prepare shots after a meal.

Even something like potato salad would drive his levels through the roof.

“The levels would reach 20, but I’ve since tried potato salad and a little while after I had half a piece of bar, and my levels were 5.7. It’s just totally amazing,” he said.

The gift he received isn’t lost on Adams.

He certainly understands the sacrifice that was made for his new lease on life.

But he recommends that everyone sign a organ donor card, “because you never know whose life you are going to save.”

And to diabetics, he recommends looking into becoming a transplant recipient, “because living without diabetes is a life-changing event.”

The Northern Pen