Student Pieces: How Many Classes in One Granola Bar?

Danielle M. Holstine
How Many Classes in One Granola Bar?
A Blessing in Disguise

By Danielle M. Holstine

And what do you do if something else is thrust upon you? Take me for example. I like to consider myself an active person. I keep a full schedule of classes, am president of a club, hold a job, and still somehow find time to exercise (I even played a sport my freshman year), but there’s more to me than just that. I also have Type 1 diabetes. I have had it for nearly nine years now. So how does this often unpredictable variable fit into the already chaotic equation that is a college student’s life?

Let’s start at the heart of all students’ needs; food. Being diabetic does not mean that certain foods have been banned from my daily intake. In fact, the only foods I actually cannot have are regular (non-diabetes) sodas. But there are limitations on this “eat whatever” diet. I have to watch my intake of carbohydrates, not to lose weight like many modern diets, but so I know how much insulin to use. So, sadly, that means I must pass on that third or fourth helping of pizza and I need to be cautious when it comes to deciding just how many cookies qualify as dessert for the day. But is all that really so bad? I mean, eating a healthy, balanced diet benefits everyone, not just diabetics. And since it is so easy to stay onto the high-carb, beige-colored food diet, it is not so bad having a little incentive to put forth the extra effort to resist temptation.

But what about the real reason we are here in college (the social life), the classes. What happens if my blood glucose level drops in the middle of a lengthy explanation about the internal architecture of Intel Pentium 4 processor? Who wants to miss that? Not to mention that it can be quite awkward, at best, to get up and walk out of a lecture, especially at a small school in an even smaller major. My solution is to always carry some food with me.

I try to keep at least one granola bar with me at all times, stuffed away in my backpack. But sometimes (for weeks, for that matter) just aren’t as good as others and one granola bar will not make it through four classes. At times like this, I up my backpack stash to two whole granola bars and a trusty bottle of glucose tablets. (Glucose tablets are made of basically a flavored powdered sugar substance that has been compacted into a convenient chewable horse pill shape.) Do they taste good? Not usually, but they work and they work fast, and that is really all that matters.

So has it been difficult to come to college and adjust to a new setting, with a whole new schedule, in an entirely new environment? Not any more so than it was for the next person. You see, I have become quite familiar with my diabetes routine so it has really become second nature to me. Don’t get me wrong here. Diabetes is a major part of my life, but I certainly don’t let it define me or take control. Rather, it is just a part of who I am. All the necessary actions I must take to ensure my health have become more of a habit over time.

In fact, as I have grown up with it I have learned so much about myself, about my strengths and weaknesses, and really more about who I am as a person. Getting diagnosed with diabetes has been a blessing in my life because not only has it allowed me to maintain discipline in all aspects of my life, it has helped me be more aware of my body and its needs, something that I think we all need a little more of in this day and time.

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