

# VOYAGE T1D

A STORY FOR EVERY CHILD STARTING THEIR JOURNEY  
WITH EARLY-STAGE TYPE 1 DIABETES



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INNODIA is an international non-profit organization providing specialized services to medicine developers focused on curative therapies for people living with type 1 diabetes (T1D). These services are delivered through its network of members and INPACT associates (the trained community of people living with T1D).

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## A JOURNEY BEGINS

Will Crosswater sat in the doctor's office, his heart racing. He'd recently been screened for type 1 diabetes, and now Doctor Glyco had the test results: there were autoantibodies in Will's blood.

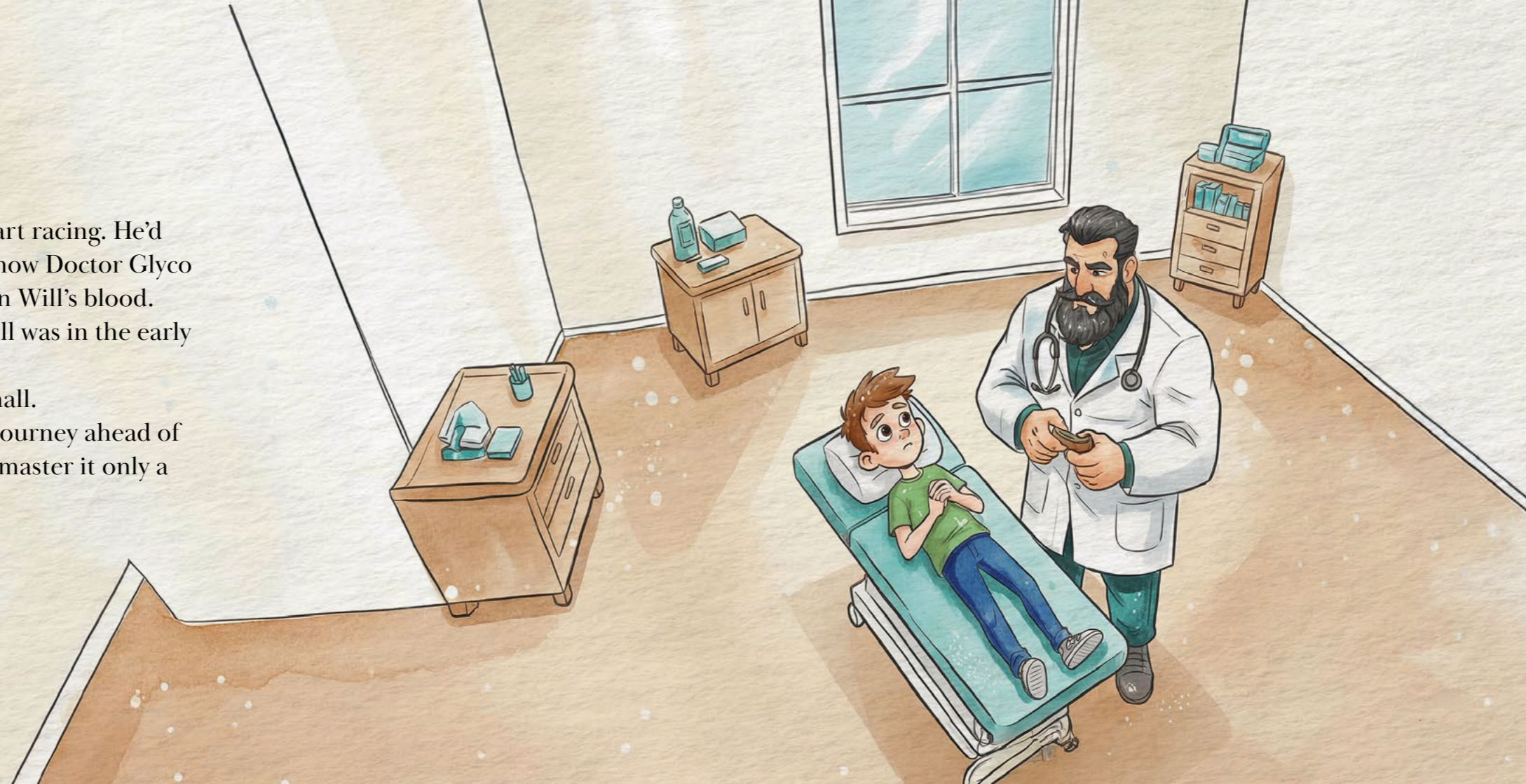
Two or more of these special markers meant Will was in the early stages of type 1 diabetes.

"What does this mean?" Will asked, his voice small.

Doctor Glyco smiled kindly. "It means there's a journey ahead of you, Will. But I've got a place that will help you master it only a special few know about..."

### References for more information

1. Phillip M, et al. *Diabetologia*. 2024;67(9):1731-59  
[simultaneously published in *Diabetes Care*. 2024;47(8):1276-98].

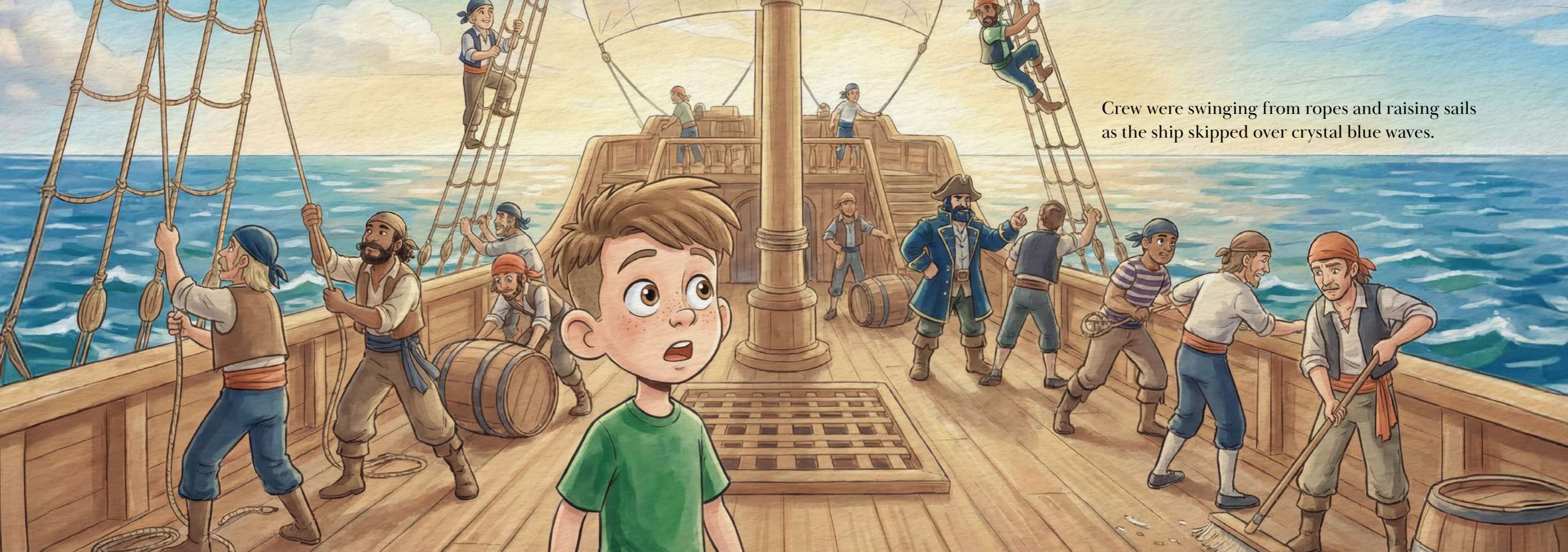


The doctor walked to a door at the back of the office. He opened it and a gust of salty sea air blew through with the sound of waves and seagulls. He motioned forward a curious Will, who stepped through the door and onto...



...the deck of a magnificent ship:  
the S.S. Voyage TID!  
Will's eyes were wide as he took  
in the wonder of it all.





Crew were swinging from ropes and raising sails as the ship skipped over crystal blue waves.

“Look lively, lads! We’ve a new member of the crew!”, a voice boomed behind him. Will looked up to see Doctor Glyco now wore a captain’s hat, a sailor’s coat and a beaming grin. He was Captain Glyco now, leader of this crew.



“This, Will, is the world where children with early-stage type 1 diabetes learn how to cross the diabetes seas.” Captain Glyco said.

Will looked around the ship,  
his stomach tied in knots.

“Do I really have to do this?”, he whispered.

Captain Glyco nodded,  
“The voyage has already begun inside you, Will.  
But you won’t sail alone.”

Before Will could say anything else,  
someone placed a hand on his shoulder.



It was Ally Anchor, one of his crewmates. She wore a beautiful starfish necklace, and her smile was warm and understanding. “Will”, said the captain, “This is Ally, my first mate. She’s sailed the type 1 diabetes seas for many years, and she’s here to help you too.” Will was still stunned and more than a bit nervous. Ally could see it on his face. “It’s normal to feel this way,” Ally said gently. “Remember: you can always talk about how you’re feeling with someone you trust.”





## THE MISSING MAPS

Captain Glyco jumped onto the rigging for the whole crew to see. “Someone get me the chest with the charts inside! Let’s show young Will here where we’re bound for!”

The deck exploded with activity. Ropes were cleared, a table found, and the strongest crew member struggled out with a heavy chest. It thudded down on the table. But just as Captain Glyco went to open it—WHAM! The entire ship rocked to one side. Ally grabbed Will and a rope to keep from falling. “What was that!?” Will shouted.



Captain Glyco rushed to the side of the ship and looked down into the water. “It’s a huge school of Spike Sugartail fish! They’ve bumped into us!”

The ship rocked again. This time, Will heard a low, scraping, wooden groan. It was the table and chest sliding across the deck to the edge.

“The charts!” Captain Glyco cried.



Will and Ally ran toward the chest, but they were too late.  
With one more rock of the ship, the chest tumbled over the railing  
and splashed into the sea below.



## A MISSION

Captain Glyco, Ally and Will peered into the water. They could see the chest sinking down, down, down into the deep.

“It’s fallen into Pancreas Reef. Someone small needs to dive down and fetch that chest,” Captain Glyco said.

“Without those charts, we won’t be able to navigate our type 1 diabetes voyage properly.”



Ally Anchor stepped forward immediately.  
“I’ll go,” she said, then turned to Will with a daring look.  
“I could use a diving partner.”  
Will’s heart pounded. The ocean looked so deep and dark. He was scared, but he knew the crew needed those charts.

“I... can try,” Will said quietly.

Captain Glyco slapped them both on the back.  
“This is actually a good opportunity to explore Pancreas Reef. You can learn a lot down there, Will. Make sure to say hello to my good friend Professor Inkwel, he knows a lot about type 1 diabetes.”



He handed them their diving helmets.  
“And keep your peepers peeled for those Spike Sugartail.  
Seeing them is a sign there could be trouble ahead.  
If you do, you tell someone.”

Will and Ally nodded, put on their diving gear,  
and stepped to the edge of the ship.  
Ally jumped in, but Will hesitated.  
This was a big moment.

He took a deep breath... and plunged into the deep.



## DIVING INTO PANCREAS REEF

The water was cool and blue-green. Will and Ally kicked their fins, swimming deeper and deeper.

Below them, the reef came into view. A beautiful field of strangely shaped coral as far as the eye could see.



“This is Pancreas Reef” Ally said through her diving helmet speaker.

“What’s a pancreas?” Will asked, amazed by the coral field.

“It’s the part of our body that isn’t working so well,” Ally replied.

He took a deep breath... and plunged into the deep.

## EXPLORING WHAT'S INSIDE THE PANCREAS

Suddenly, eight purple tentacles waved from behind a coral formation and out floated Professor Inkwel, the wise octopus, his eyes twinkling behind tiny spectacles.

“Ah, what do we have here? Crew from Captain Glyco’s ship exploring the reef? Welcome! Welcome!”, he said warmly.

“Let me show you around.”



“Actually, Professor Inkwel, we’re on an important mission.”

Ally tried to say but the Professor just waved a tentacle, “Nothing is more important than knowledge, Ms Anchor.”

Ally gave Will a knowing smile, because this was Professor Inkwel, and nothing could stop him from teaching.

Professor Inkwell gestured with his tentacles at a nearby coral.

“See, your pancreas helps control levels of something called glucose. This comes from the food you eat and gives you the energy you need to run, swim and play.”

References for more information  
2. Röder PV, et al. Exp Mol Med. 2016;48(3):e219.



Will swam closer,  
fascinated by the coral.

“So what’s wrong with mine?”  
Will asked sheepishly.

Professor Inkwell's expression was kind. "Your body has an amazing defense team called the immune system. It's a bit like the creatures living in this coral.

Normally they live quietly and work hard to protect you from germs. But in type 1 diabetes, the immune system gets confused."

He gestured to other fish nibbling at the coral. "It attacks bits of the pancreas by mistake, so instead of turning glucose into energy, the glucose just builds up and up and up and then you'll start to feel it in your body." Ally leaned close to Will, "And that's when Spike Sugartail can appear", he said.

References for more information

3. Atkinson MA. Cold Spring Harb Perspect Med. 2012;2(11):a007641.



The Professor counted with his tentacles,  
“Too much glucose can make you:

- Feel very tired
- Feel very thirsty
- Need to use the toilet more often than usual
- Feel very hungry even after you’ve eaten
- Lose weight even though you’re eating”

Will’s eyes widened.

“That doesn’t sound good.”



“In early-stage type 1 diabetes, your pancreas is still able to keep you healthy,” Professor Inkwell explained. “But in the future, you’ll need help to use that sugary energy properly.” Ally swam up beside Will.

“It’s okay, Will. There’ll be time to get ready for this. You just need to know to look out for those feelings and tell an adult when you feel them. Now, let’s go find that chest!”

References for more information

1. Phillip M, et al. Diabetologia. 2024;67(9):1731-59 [simultaneously published in Diabetes Care. 2024;47(8):1276-98].
4. Diabetes UK. Diabetes signs & symptoms. Available at: <https://www.diabetes.org.uk/about-diabetes/symptoms> (Accessed February 2026).

## THE SEARCH FOR THE CHEST

Professor Inkwel's eyes lit up.  
"Ah yes! I think I saw a chest float  
past just a few minutes ago. Follow me!"

The three of them swam away from Pancreas Reef,  
heading deeper into the ocean.

As they left the colorful coral behind,  
the water grew darker and the ocean floor  
stretched out vast and shadowy below them.



Will felt a flutter of fear in his chest.  
It was so big and dark out here.  
But Ally squeezed Will's hand  
and whispered, "You're doing great",  
and suddenly the water didn't seem  
quite so big and dark.

“There it is!” Professor Inkwell pointed with a tentacle.

In the distance, resting on the sandy ocean floor,  
was the wooden chest with the charts inside.

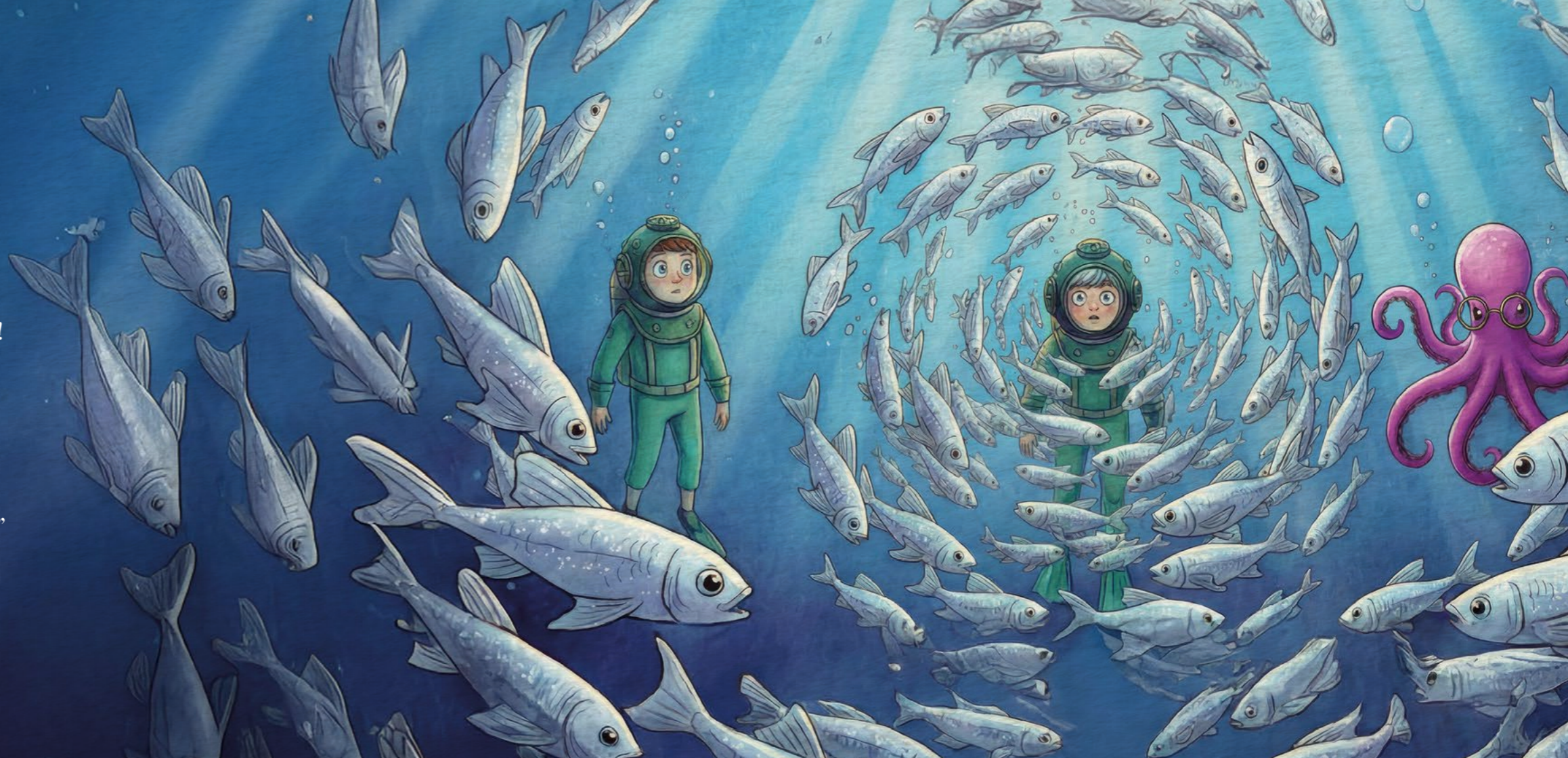
They swam toward it, Will’s fins kicking  
steadily. They were almost there when...






A flash of light caught Will's eye.  
Will looked up and gasped.  
Hundreds of sleek, silver fish  
with sparkly scales were swimming  
toward them through the water.  
They swirled and darted, beautiful  
and bright.

“Oh look, that’s Spike Sugartail!”  
Will said, remembering Captain Glyco’s  
warning. But the fish weren’t swimming  
toward Will. They were surrounding Ally!  
Professor Inkwell nodded seriously.  
“Good eye, Will. Spike Sugartail  
are attracted to anyone with lots of  
glucose. Remember my lesson?  
Ally has too much glucose in her blood.  
That’s why we need to look out for them.”



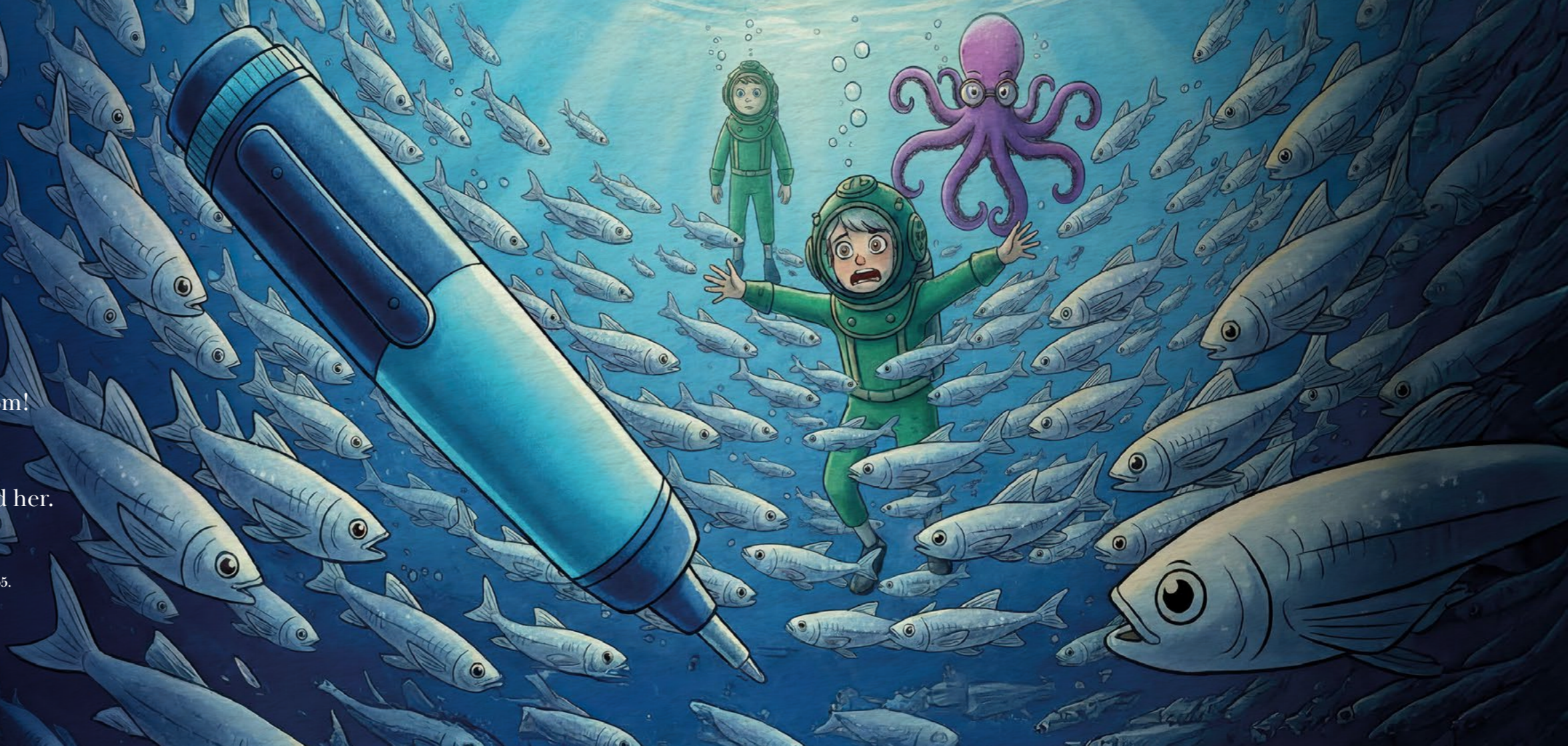
An illustration of a young girl named Ally in a green diving suit, floating in the middle of a swirling school of fish. She is holding a purple device with a white warning sign on its screen. To her right, a purple octopus is visible. The background is a deep blue ocean with many fish swimming around her.

Ally floated in the middle of the swirling school of Spike Sugartail fish. She reached into her diving belt and pulled out a strange device.

“That’s a glucometer” Professor Inkwell whispered to Will, “It tells Ally how much glucose is in her blood.” Ally calmly pressed it against her finger. Beep-beep-beep it went.

Pale and shaking, she pulled out another strange device, an insulin pen. “I need to inject myself with insulin,” Ally said. “It’s a medicine that helps balance the glucose in my body.” She tried to inject herself...  
...but it slipped from her hand and began to sink toward the sandy bottom! “No!” Ally cried. Ally was stuck, unable to see and move as the bright, colorful fish dazzled around her.

References for more information  
5. Hatan S, et al. J Clin Res Pediatr Endocrinol. 2024 Sep 4;16(3):245-55.




Will knew what he had to do.

He dove down, his fins propelling him through the living cloud of Spike Sugartail until he reached the ocean floor.



Sand floated away as he dug and dug. Finally, his fingers closed around the device. Will swam back up to Ally and put the device in her hands.



“Thank you, Will,” Ally said, her voice sounding relieved. She pressed the device against her stomach and injected herself with insulin. Slowly, the Spike Sugartail fish began to swim away, their sparkly scales fading into the deep blue water.

“That was brave, Will,” Professor Inkwell said. Will felt his cheeks warm with pride.

References for more information

5. Hatan S, et al. J Clin Res Pediatr Endocrinol. 2024 Sep 4;16(3):245-55.

An illustration of two children, a girl with grey hair and a boy with brown hair, both wearing green diving suits with helmets and masks. They are standing in a blue underwater environment. To their left is a large school of silver fish swimming towards the right. Bubbles are rising from the bottom. The background is a deep blue with some light rays filtering down.

Ally tucked the device away.

“You won’t need to use this device yet, Will. It can take months to years before people with early-stage type 1 diabetes need to take insulin. When you do need it, it’ll help you stay healthy.”

Will nodded, understanding. He wasn’t at that stage yet, but one day he might be. And when that day came, he’d know what to do.

**References for more information**

1. Phillip M, et al. Diabetologia. 2024;67(9):1731-59 [simultaneously published in Diabetes Care.2024;47(8):1276-98].
6. Atkinson MA, Raghavendra GM. Cell Metab. 2023;35(9):1500-18.

## RETRIEVING THE CHEST

The trio swam the last few meters to the chest. Professor Inkwell wrapped his tentacles around one side, while Will and Ally grabbed the handles.

“On three!” called Ally. “One, two, three!”

Together, they lifted. The chest was heavy, but they heaved as hard as they could, knowing that inside this chest were the charts they needed to cross the diabetes seas.



With all three of them working together, they managed to carry it up through the water toward the ship above.

As they neared the ship, Ally looked to Will with a sparkle in her eyes, “You really were brave today, Will. Early-stage type 1 diabetes puts you on a different journey from others, but I’m sure in time you’ll master the voyage.”



## A HERO RETURNS

Back on deck, Will stood dripping wet in a puddle of seawater. Something was different about him.

He felt taller somehow, even though he was the same height as before. Ally gave him a thankful hug as Captain Glyco walked over and put his hand on Will's shoulder.

“You faced the reef, young Will. And it sounds like you learned about early-stage type 1 diabetes while you were down there.”

“Yes,” Will said, smiling. “Professor Inkwel taught me about the pancreas. And we saw Spike Sugartail, too! They swam off into the deep.”



“That’s good to know.”  
Captain Glyco said.

“We’ll have to keep a watch for them,  
to make sure the ship stays steady.  
At this stage in your voyage, Will,  
there’s no need to change much.



Keep doing what you’re doing,  
remember to eat a balanced diet,  
and stay alert for Spike Sugartail.  
That’s all I ask of new crew!”

And with that he opened the door  
to the captain’s cabin, and Will  
stepped through into...

...the doctor's office.

All was as they left it, barely a second had passed on the clock, and Captain Glyco was now Doctor Glyco again, in a long white coat. Will could barely contain himself as his mom opened the door to take his hand and bring him home. "Is there anything Will needs to take home?" She asked Doctor Glyco. "Will has everything he needs for today," he answered with a wink to Will.



As they left Doctor Glyco's office behind and started to go home, Will tucked his hands into his pockets.

And something was there.

Held tight in his hand, was Ally Anchor's starfish necklace!



Will's crew was out there, ready and waiting to help him.

"Mom", Will said softly, "You'll never believe what just happened."

## PROFESSOR INKWELL'S ACADEMY

We're below decks on the S.S. Voyage T1D with Professor Inkwell. He's come aboard to help us on our journey by explaining the full science behind type 1 diabetes.

"Now, you won't have to remember all of this to stay happy and healthy, but it's always good to know what our bodies are doing!"

Professor Inkwell draws a picture of the pancreas.



"Inside the pancreas are beta-cells. These create insulin, a chemical that helps turn the glucose in our food into the energy that helps us move around."

References for more information

1. Röder PV, et al. Exp Mol Med. 2016;48(3):e219.

He adds to the picture to show the immune system attacking beta-cells, "Remember those creatures from before? The ones nibbling at the reef? Well in your body, the immune system acts like them, attacking the beta-cells. Over time, this means they create less insulin and that's how glucose builds up".

References for more information

3. Atkinson MA. Cold Spring Harb Perspect Med. 2012;2(11):a007641.





Stage 1



Stage 2



Stage 3

“You have early-stage type 1 diabetes—that’s stage 1 or stage 2—which means you might have a little too much glucose, but you still won’t feel different right now. Regular tests can help Captain Glyco predict when stage 3 is about to start. Stage 3 is when you’ll feel symptoms and need to use insulin sometimes. So, like Captain Glyco said, just remember the symptoms, keep eating and moving like you do, and tell an adult if you ever feel like you’ve got too much glucose!”

References for more information

I. Phillip M, et al. Diabetologia. 2024;67(9):1731-59 [simultaneously published in Diabetes Care.2024;47(8):1276-98].

Professor Inkwel points to the symptoms of hyperglycemia (high blood glucose):

- Feeling very tired
- Feeling very thirsty
- Needing to use the toilet more often than usual
- Feeling very hungry even after you've eaten
- Losing weight even though you're eating

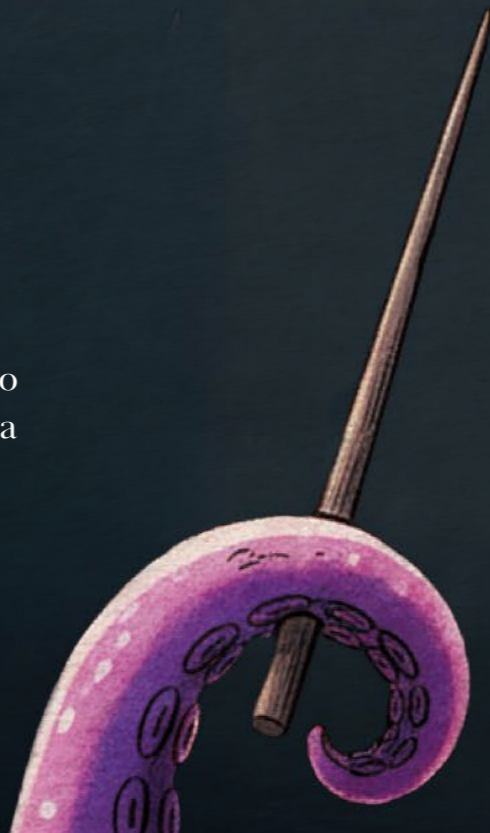
“Don't worry,” Professor Inkwel said,

“You won't see or feel them yet. But one day, further into your voyage, you'll feel in your body when hyperglycemia is happening, and that's when you need to tell an adult.”

References for more information

1. Phillip M, et al. Diabetologia. 2024;67(9):1731-59 [simultaneously published in Diabetes Care.2024;47(8):1276-98].

4. Diabetes UK. Diabetes signs & symptoms. Available at: <https://www.diabetes.org.uk/about-diabetes/symptoms> (Accessed February 2026).



# GLOSSARY

## HYPERGLYCEMIA

Said “hi-per-gly-seem-ee-uh” is when there’s too much glucose in your blood. This happens when your pancreas doesn’t make enough insulin.

## INSULIN

A substance that is made by your pancreas to help glucose get around your body. Without enough insulin, glucose stays in your blood, and causes hyperglycemia.

## GLUCOSE

A type of sugar your body uses for energy. When you eat, food is turned into glucose, which helps you play, think and grow.

## PANCREAS

A small organ that helps digest food and makes insulin.

## BETA CELLS

These cells live in your pancreas and normally make the insulin you need to stay healthy.

## TYPE 1 DIABETES

A condition where your immune system attacks the beta cells in your pancreas. This means your body cannot make enough insulin, which leads to hyperglycemia.

## IMMUNE SYSTEM

Your body’s natural defense against infections. It’s made up of special cells that normally protect you from getting sick.

## AUTOANTIBODIES

These are tiny things in your blood that your immune system makes. They can tell your doctor when you have early-stage type 1 diabetes.

#### References

1. Phillip M, et al. *Diabetologia*. 2024;67(9):1731-59 [simultaneously published in *Diabetes Care*.2024;47(8):1276-98].
2. Röder PV, et al. *Exp Mol Med*. 2016;48(3):e219.
3. Atkinson MA. *Cold Spring Harb Perspect Med*. 2012;2(11):a007641.
4. Diabetes UK. Diabetes signs & symptoms. Available at: <https://www.diabetes.org.uk/about-diabetes/symptoms> (Accessed February 2026).
5. Hatan S, et al. *J Clin Res Pediatr Endocrinol*. 2024 Sep 4;16(3):245-55.
6. Atkinson MA, Raghavendra GM. *Cell Metab*. 2023;35(9):1500-18.

Voyage T1D is a great ship with one mission: to help children with early-stage type 1 diabetes confidently navigate the Diabetes Seas.. But when newly diagnosed crewmate Will Crosswater joins, the ship runs into trouble that only he and a friend can solve. It'll take courage and teamwork to save the day. Will they get Voyage T1D back on course?

Set sail on an educational story to help children understand their early-stage type 1 diabetes diagnosis. By reading it with your child, you can help them to navigate the story, answering any questions they have and reassuring them about the journey they're now taking.

This story is fictional and meant to educate about early-stage type 1 diabetes. Characters and events are imaginary. Do not use glucometers or insulin devices underwater. Always follow your licensed healthcare provider's guidance for insulin use, storage, and diabetes management.

