

# **POSITIVE!**

**DIABETES**

MARCH 2003



## **Positive Profile: Sarah Yourman**

**Caring for Children with Diabetes**

**POSITIVE LIVING WITH DIABETES**



# Sarah Yourman

**A**t 13 years of age, Sarah Yourman has an athletic resume that would make anyone proud. She learned to ski when she was two, and learned to do cartwheels on skis when she was just six. Shortly afterward, she began freestyle skiing competitively. She's been on the Killington Freestyle Ski Team for one year, and on the Mt. Snow Freestyle Ski Team for three. She has also begun competing as a slalom skier. She enjoys gymnastics, swimming, bicycle riding, running and performing acrobatics on the trampoline. In gym at school, her class competed for the Presidential Physical Fitness award from third to fifth grade. (She's in seventh grade now.) Sarah was the only girl in her class of 30 fifth-grade

girls to earn the award for all three years. During the summer, she performs with the "Xtreme Athletes Against Drugs and Tobacco" program and enjoys two weeks away from her parents to develop friendships and share experiences at diabetes camp.

What makes this even more remarkable is that Sarah was diagnosed with Cystic Fibrosis at the age of 19 months, and then with diabetes at the age of eight. She is also challenged by asthma and Crohn's disease. In addition to taking care of her diabetes, Sarah takes as many as fifty pills a day to combat her Cystic Fibrosis, and undergoes three 45-minute sessions of percussive and aerosol therapy every day to dislodge and thin the thick mucus in her lungs. (Sarah's 10-

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year-old brother, Jeffrey, also has CF. Their mother, Lisa, jokes that she spends an awful lot of time beating her children.)

Cystic Fibrosis is a life-shortening progressive lung disease. The median age of survival is just 31 years. But Sarah doesn't waste time feeling sorry for herself.

"Sarah always has a smile on her face," her mother says.

Hannah Hardaway, 2002 Olympic Mogul Skier said, "Sarah is one of those people everyone wants to be around. She radiates happiness and energy, reminding us all that there are no boundaries to what we can accomplish if we put our heart and soul in it!"

Sarah started using a Medtronic MiniMed insulin pump to control her diabetes in June, 2001, and she loves it. "No more insulin shots!" she says. She started on a MiniMed 508, then upgraded to the new Paradigm pump in July, 2002.

"Sarah did well from the moment she went on it," Lisa says. "She went from having extreme highs and extreme lows to having normal blood sugars. She had been giving herself her own shots since she was nine,





and when she got the pump she took right over and learned everything about it. It is fantastic."

Sarah is also a fan of the OneTouch Ultra blood glucose monitor, which she uses to check her blood sugars six times a day. "She loves it," Lisa says. "It's small, so it fits in her little purse. And it gives the reading in five seconds. As quick as she puts her finger to the test strip she's ready to pack it up and put it away and move on with life."

"Our kids have accepted the cards they've been dealt," Lisa says. "Even



though they're not great cards, they don't feel sorry for themselves and they're not angry. Sarah in particular has a tremendously positive attitude. I have more problems with the normal things—homework, getting them to clean their rooms—than with their illnesses."

## Sarah has a tremendously positive attitude.



As Sarah says herself, "There is a whole great world out there. My message to kids with CF or diabetes, as well as their parents, is make the most of it and enjoy yourself by keeping strong and doing things you like to do!"

"Both Cystic Fibrosis and diabetes can get serious if you let them," Sarah says. "What I do is follow the routine that my parents and doctors made to make sure I get the best care possible now, so that when the cure comes—I will be in tip top shape!"

More information on this inspiring young athlete is available on-line at [sarahyourman.com](http://sarahyourman.com), a site that Sarah and

her mother work on together. □