

Designing Type One Diabetes for the Person Behind the Numbers

Abstract

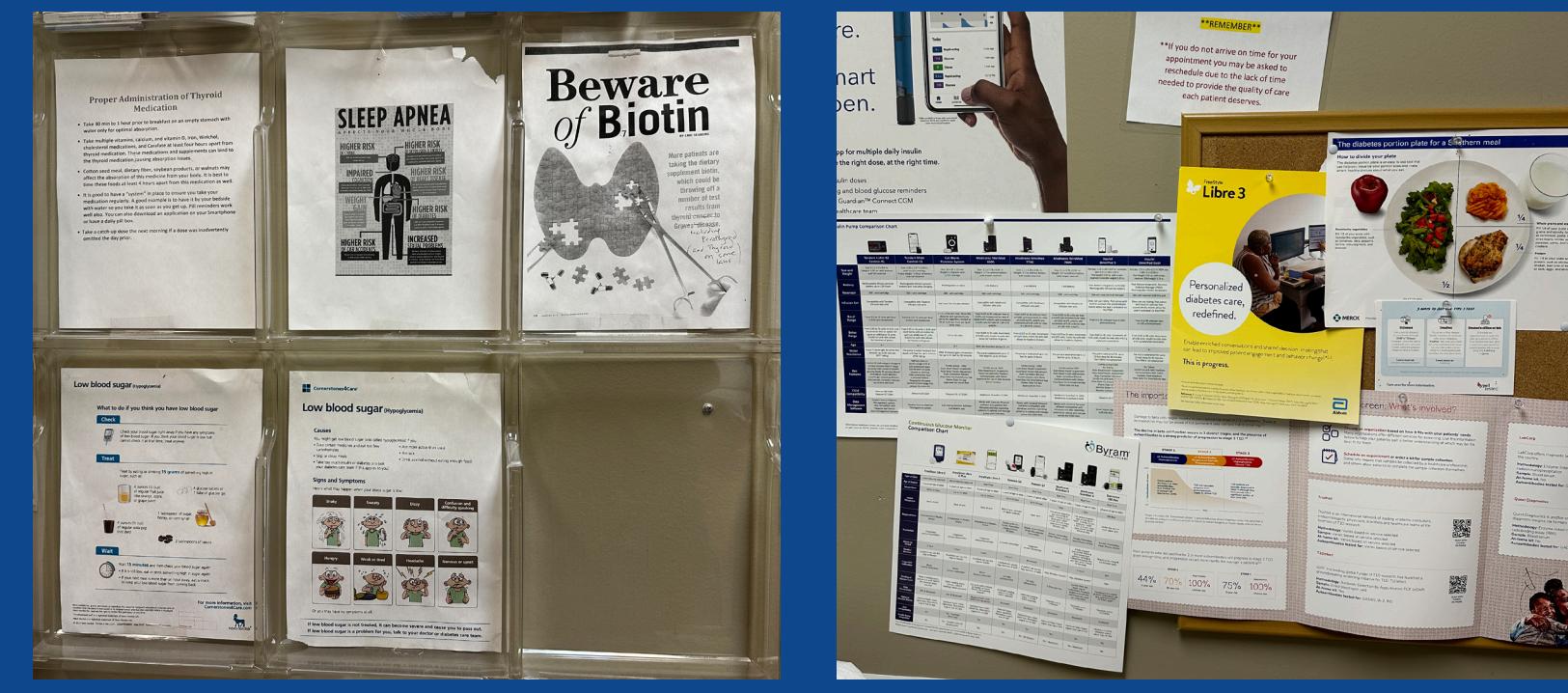
Type 1 Diabetes (T1D) information can be cold, quantitative data and difficult to process when a diagnosis is new. This project focuses on translating clinical information into content that is reliable, and useful in everyday experiences. Managing T1D means constantly monitoring your blood glucose levels. In short, functioning as your own pancreas is a full-time job that can quickly lead to burnout. Yet, the sterile, clinical design of most diabetes resources only adds stress to the process.

This redesign will provide complete scientific data, but framed in a human-centered perspective. Through the analysis of my lived experience, as well as interviews with people living with T1D, a common sentiment is that the existing materials feel impersonal and clinical. They function more as a strict set of rules as opposed to an invitation to understand the individual choices that will work for each one of us. By incorporating warmth, personality, and positivity, this project creates a system that not only informs but also supports mental well-being. Ultimately, by showing that rethinking the way diabetes data is presented can do more than just inform, it can inspire, reduce stress, and encourage better health outcomes.

Why Can Visuals Help?

Managing Type 1 Diabetes requires constant decision-making, which can be mentally exhausting. The daily routine of monitoring blood sugar, calculating insulin doses, and tracking food intake creates a heavy cognitive load. This ongoing strain can lead to diabetes burnout, where the mental and emotional toll of self-care becomes overwhelming. Well designed, engaging visuals help reduce this burden by making complex information easier to process and apply. When key concepts—like carb counting, insulin timing, and blood sugar trends—are presented in a clear, visually appealing way, they become more intuitive. This not only makes diabetes management less stressful but also encourages consistency in healthy habits.

Below, I have included two pictures of design at my Endocrinology office that feel uninspiring and add to the medical burnout. They all have great information, but the only things that are thoughtfully designed or printed in color are device ads. I believe boldly illustrated infographics with more color existing where diabetics frequent can help mitigate medical stress.



Research

This project was sparked by my own type one diabetes diagnosis. I knew what I wanted as a type one diabetic, but everyone's lived experience differs from each other. This is where I landed on a questionnaire. We start a handful of questions, but here are the ones among them that influenced this project the most.

- What day to day struggles do you face being a type one diabetic?
- Do you think that fun visuals could make being a type one diabetic easier?
- What advice would you give a new type one diabetic?

The responses to this questionnaire gave me confidence that what I am creating would actually benefit others with type one diabetes. I proceeded in a more dramatic direction although, I made it more "fun".

I made a plan for this direction to ensure I would not get lost and represent this community to the best of my ability. This is something I borrowed from the brand design process, but I came up with a hand full of words guidelines. These are: Unique, Respectful, Expressive, Informative, Digestible, Engaging, and Fun. I find that these handful of descriptions puts together an identity that has not been represented in the type one diabetic community, and challenges the typical design precedent.

Conclusion

Type One Digest is a free, website resource designed to reimagine how we communicate information about Type 1 Diabetes. At its core, it's about taking complex, often overwhelming medical data and turning it into something that feels human, relatable, and above all useful. This project shifts the narrative away from common sterile charts and numbers, and opts to use expressive visuals, approachable language, and real-life context to make the experience of living with T1D feel less clinical and more compassionate.

For many people with Type 1 Diabetes, managing the condition can feel like a full-time job. The constant stream of numbers, tracking, and decision making contributes to medical burnout. Type One Digest responds to this challenge by offering a more engaging, uplifting, and personal design approach without compromising the seriousness of the information. It promotes healthy habits not through fear or formality, but through clarity, warmth, and empathy.

This project lives on a custom coded website that serves as the home for all resources. The interface is intentionally minimalist, designed with a simple user experience that lets the content shine. Bright colors, expressive illustrations, and clear layouts help make complex topics more digestible and far less intimidating.

The blue bird is named Pablo. I created him as a friendly mascot to embody the spirit of Type One Digest. Just like college sports teams rally around their mascots, communities often find strength and connection through shared symbols. Pablo gives people something to identify with. His playful presence reinforces the lighthearted design direction of the project, bringing warmth and personality to a topic that's often treated with clinical seriousness. His main job? To make people smile, ease the weight of the subject matter, and remind us that even in the midst of managing a chronic condition, joy still has a place.

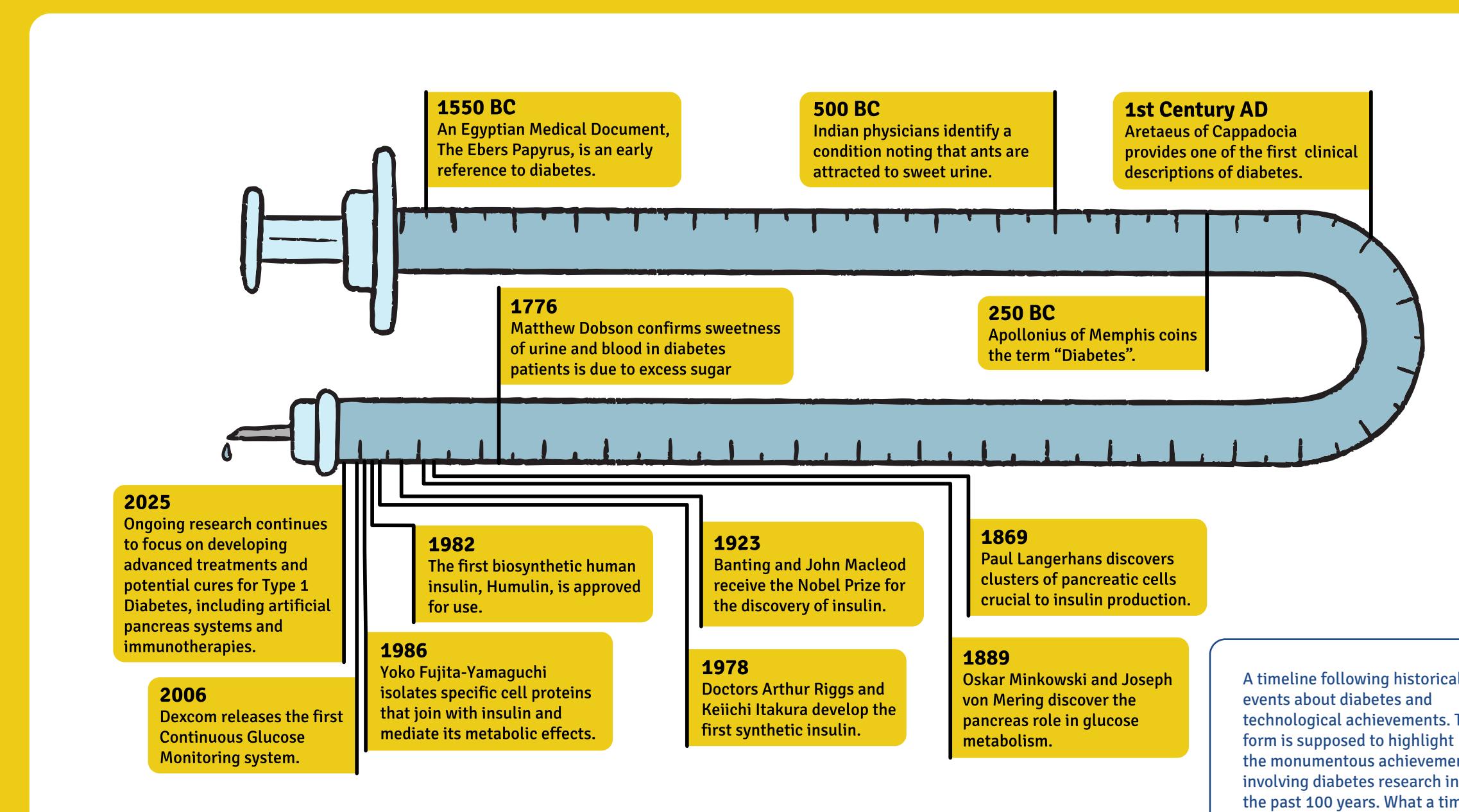
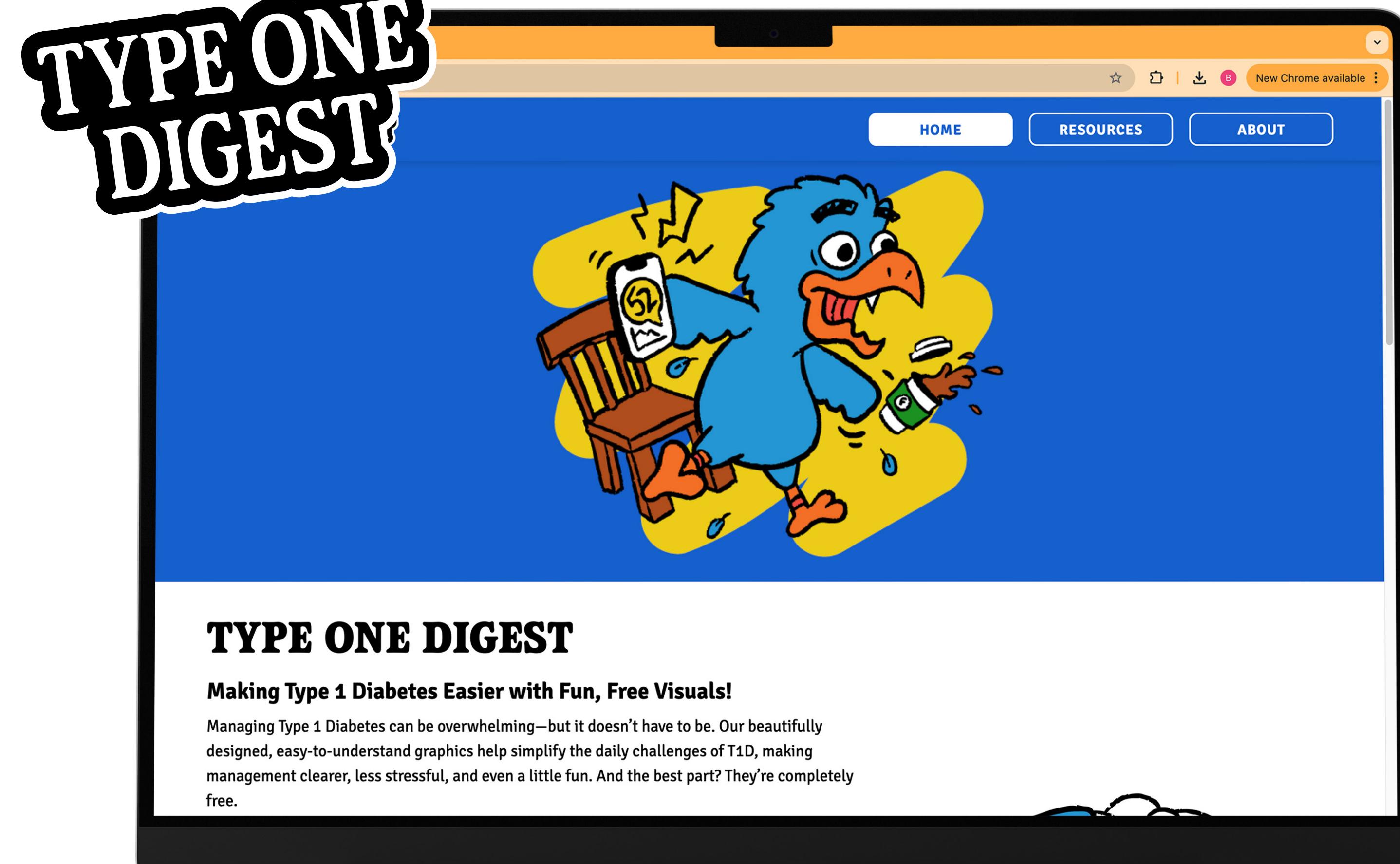
In short, Type One Digest is not just a resource, it's a visual and emotional reframe of diabetes education. It's not about the disease itself, but about supporting the people who live with it every single day.

References

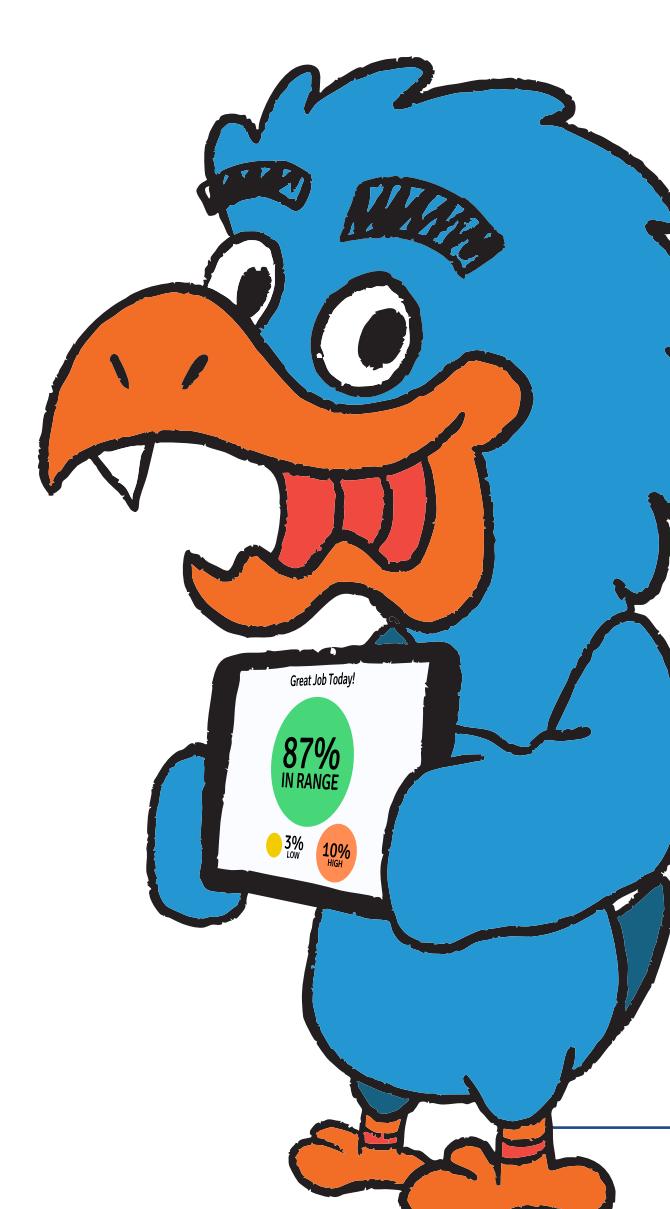
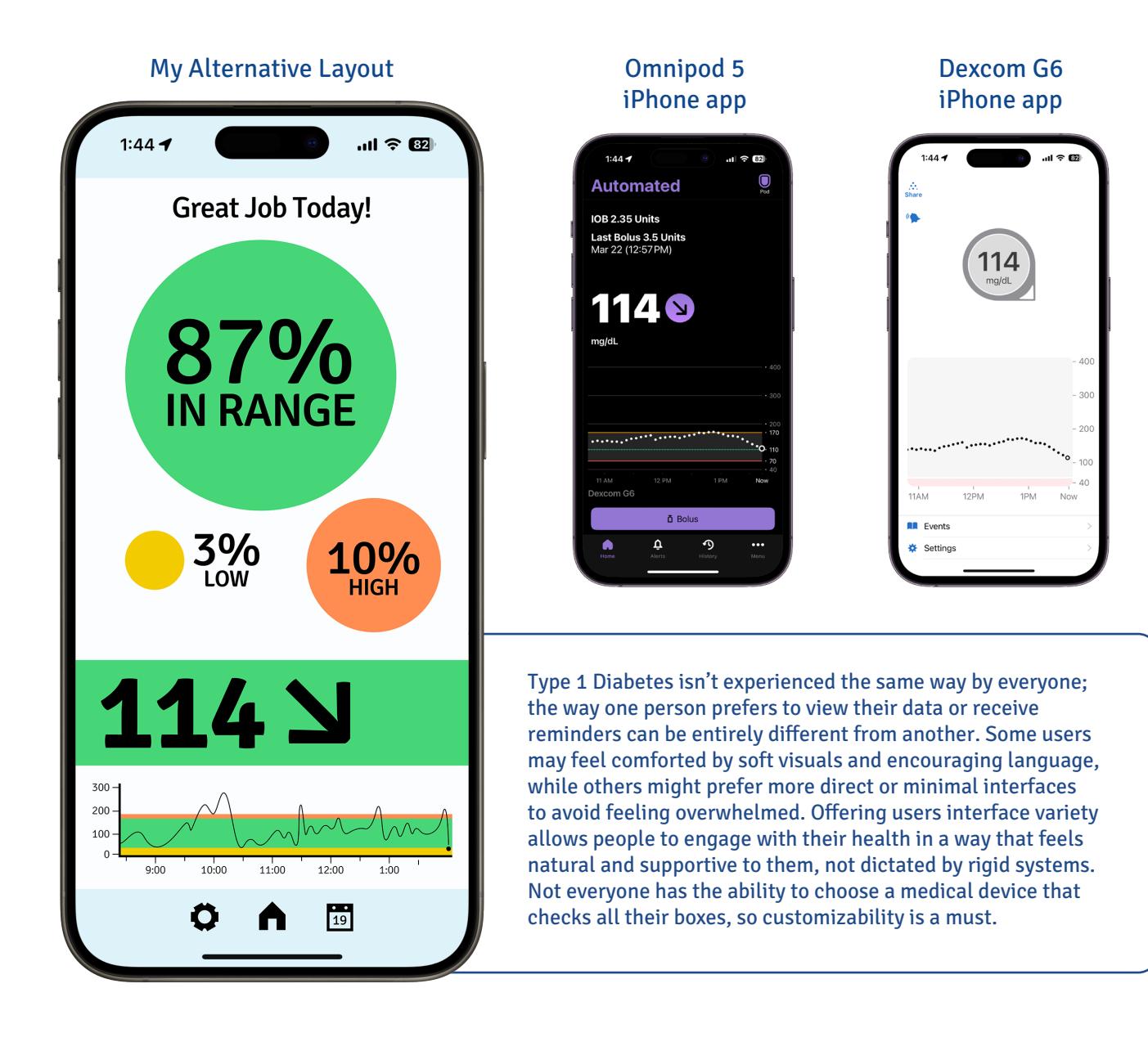
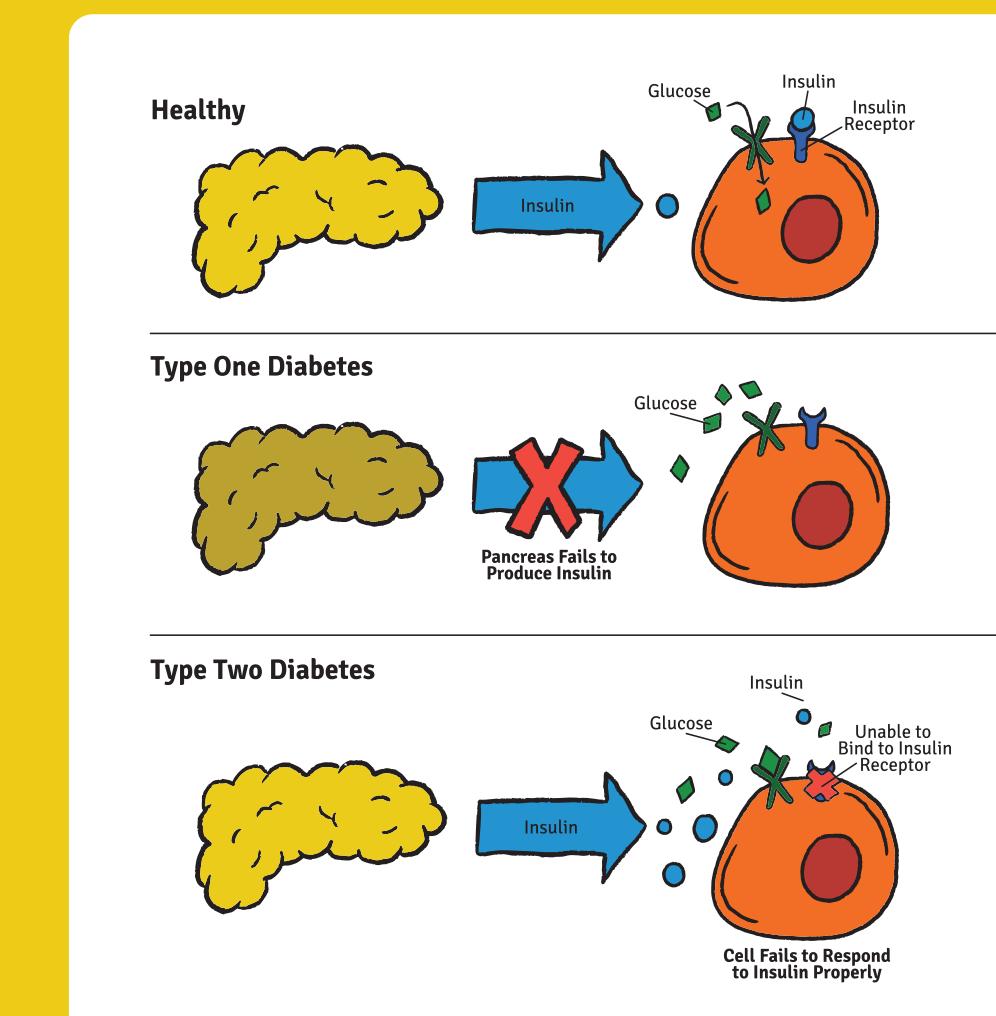
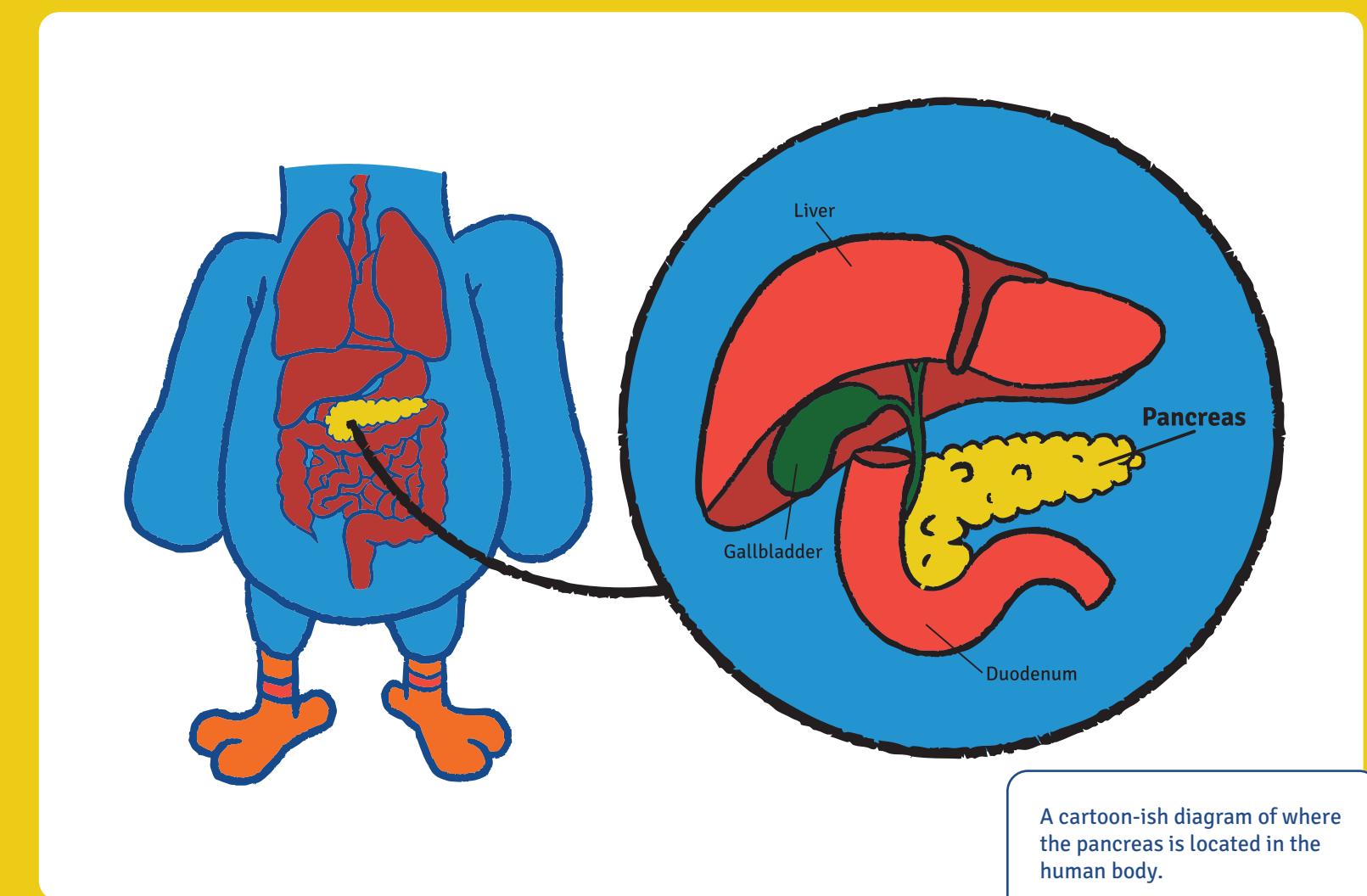
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TYPE ONE DIGEST



ELEMENTS THAT AFFECT BLOOD GLUCOSE LEVELS	
A lot affects your glucose, don't let it affect your day!	
CI	SO
PI	SC
AC	SD
FI	SR
AS	SC
CI	EM
ID	O
IT	SD
PS	SR
A	SC
ET	SC
EM	EM
PR	EM
HE	EM
CC	SC
UT	SC
WS	SC
HL	SC
WQ	SC
SH	SC
M	SC
CR	SC
ES	SR
TE	SC
ED	SC
S	SC
AT	SC
GH	SC
GH	SC
IF	SC
SI	SC
SS	SC
AL	SC
DT	SC
AT	SC
FP	SC
CP	SC
AP	SC
AL	SC
SH	SC
TF	SC
LG	SC
MC	SC
CL	SC
AA	SC



If this user interface and experience proves successful, I believe Type One Digest has the potential to expand beyond digital screens and into the physical world. While physical glucose displays already exist, they often feel clinical and uninspired. By leveraging more powerful and customizable technology, we open the door to entirely new ways of visualizing and interacting with glucose data—ways that feel more human, more personal.

This illustration to the right imagines what a physical glucose monitoring system designed for Type One Digest could look like. More than just a tool, it serves as a gentle, visual reminder that you're doing well. It's about support, not surveillance; encouragement, not alarms.