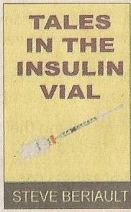


The I of the needle: Tales in the Insulin Vial

New book celebrates a life lived with diabetes, overcoming the obstacles that the disease puts in the way of anyone who has it



TALES IN THE INSULIN VIAL
By Steve Beriault
Raider Publishing, 233 pages,
\$17.99 hardcover, \$10.99
paperback

unconscious last night for 20 minutes because I took too much insulin and had a hypoglycemic reaction.”

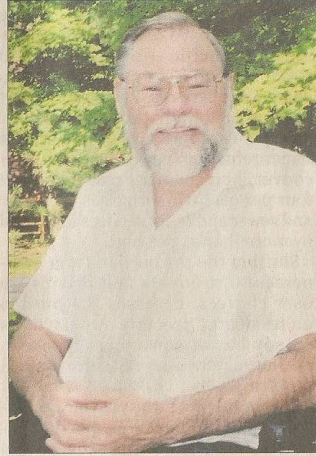
Beriault's new book, *Tales In The Insulin Vial*, traces his lifelong fight with juvenile, or Type 1, insulin-dependent diabetes. Published by Raider Publishing, it's out in time for Diabetes Awareness Month, which is November.

Beriault is among the 10 per cent of diabetics who have Type 1 diabetes. Some nine million people live with diabetes or pre-diabetes in this country, according to the Canadian Diabetes Association.

Now 59, Beriault was diagnosed after his parents saw their two-year-old son drag a chair to the kitchen sink to drink water drops from the tap. Extreme thirst is a major symptom of the disease.

With Type 1 diabetes, the body destroys pancreatic cells that produce insulin, a hormone that helps cells absorb the glucose they use for energy. Without insulin, glucose stays in the bloodstream and damages organs, among other harmful effects. Scientists have not determined its cause.

Over the years, the disease has taken



Steve Beriault wanted to show that diabetes can't hold a person back.

its toll on Beriault. He has had a kidney transplant, and both legs have been amputated below the knee. He also has heart damage and impaired vision.

“Diabetes is a rat that sits on your shoulder and gnaws at you,” he once said.

“Every time you give it a chance, it takes a chunk out of you.”

When Beriault was cycling across the country, he'd inject himself with insulin once a day and rely on a squirt of honey from a plastic bottle whenever his body told him that his blood sugars were out of whack.

He and his wife Maria have two sons, Dan and Nick. When he was five, Nick was diagnosed with juvenile diabetes, or Type 1, like his dad.

The advances in fighting the disease mean that Nick has normal blood sugar levels most of the time.

“He's 22 now and doing quite well,” says Beriault. “He's on multiple injection systems, he's using a pump now, and he has a blood glucose monitoring device, which I didn't have until I was 30.

“I was on a single injection of insulin a day. Anyone now would look at you like you're crazy to do something like that. That's the way we did it back then.”

Beriault now has six to seven insulin injections a day, and uses

ultrafine coated needles that are virtually painless.

After learning to walk again with his new prosthetic legs, Beriault got involved with the Steel Legs Walk, a fundraising event in Toronto for the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation.

He has completed five of the annual 5k walkathons, and has personally raised more than \$106,000.

Beriault is retired from his job as director of health care services at National Data Corp., a firm that processes electronic health claims for insurance companies.

“I wrote the book to show that although the disease is tough, there are success stories. You have troubles, but they can't hold you back from doing things in life.”

Beriault lives with his family in Newmarket, near Toronto.

“My wife and I are still in love,” he says, adding that they have “an average middle-class life.”

But by now, you'll have figured out that there is nothing average about Steve Beriault.

Postmedia News

BY BRUCE WARD

In the summer of 1975, Steve Beriault cycled across Canada, from Vancouver to St. John's, N.L. Beriault met many people along the way who marvelled at his sense of adventure. Imagine their astonishment had they known he was a diabetic.

“People were amazed at what I was doing, but I never told anybody I was diabetic,” he says. “They thought a diabetic could never do it, and that it was way beyond their capability.”

“Back in my day, mention diabetes and everybody thought you were weird. I kept my mouth shut and tried to be like everyone else. I wouldn't go to school and say, ‘By the way, I was

Government General's Award-nominated novel about torcible confinement. The narrator is five years old.

(5) 4 wks
The Confession
John Grisham
A legal suspense story about the morality of the death penalty.

(6) 8 wks
Annabel
Kathleen Winter
A novel about an intersex child who's being raised as a boy in backwoods Labrador.

control or defeat the rise of Arab nationalism.

With this thread, Gerolymatos tracks British and American support for the fundamentalist Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt 50 years ago as a counter to the Arab nationalist President Gamal Abdel Nasser to the rise of al-Qaida and the 2001 attacks on New York and Washington.

The title reminds that Mils and

JONATHAN MANTHORPE
VANCOUVER SUN