

[VIDEO TRANSCRIPT]

ERRON JAY: More often than not, fear can be due to a lack of information. It's true in life and it's also true when you've been diagnosed with diabetes. When someone mentions they have questions and may be a little nervous about insulin, I'm sympathetic, but I'm also going to dig in and find out what they're concerned about. In this week's "If I Knew Then What I Know Now," we'll meet JoAnn, a mother and grandmother who learned how to overcome her fears and take control of her diabetes.

JOANN: If I knew then what I know now, I would have taken insulin sooner. Because you feel better sooner, and you have more control. They made it like it was a last resort. You take this and you have really messed up, and that's not true. Like certain diseases run in different families, and for me it's like, "Who doesn't have diabetes?" you know? 'Cause now it's affecting my cousins, my first cousins and all, because our parents and grandparents. Even though the family history was there, nobody was really taking care of themselves or really understood what it was and was doing what they were supposed to do. So, needless to say, I kind of did the same thing for six years.

Look at my daughter, how cute...and she, too, now has type 2 diabetes, and she has an 8-year-old. But she went totally all out as to make sure he eats healthy. Her experience is totally different because he didn't get anything sweet until he was a year old – a piece of cake. If I knew then what I know now, I'd tell her, "You're going to be the one that has the child that breaks the cycle."

And I'm proud to say...I helped her, yes. You're gonna have to make changes...and they're not hard. It's things that we should be doing anyway. ...you know, It's like taking on a new project. Do 60 percent, 70 percent. Get up to at least 80 percent to where you're doing 80 percent right. Let's hit the ground running with the education. Let's change the way we're eating.

Traditionally, being African-American, we go all out for the holidays, all right. You have a dessert table, the food. Do you need four or five meats? No. Do you need the chocolate cake, banana pudding, peach cobbler? Hecks no. What I did, I skipped the food and had all the desserts. So if I knew then what I know now, I would eat first, and then I'd have a little bit. Because we can have a little bit. You just cannot have a lot.

If I knew then what I know now, insulin would be one of the things that I would take. One of the tools that I would choose to use to help me with my diabetes. It's gonna be a tool that you can take out of that toolbox and use. It's gonna be one of your lifesavers. Not your only one, but one of them. Now, of course, that's not a miracle, that if you do this,

you don't have to do anything else. You still have to eat healthy, you still have to exercise. I may ride a bike, I may lay on the floor pretendin' like I'm doing yoga. I say pretendin' because I don't know whether I'm doing it right or not. I'm doing it with the DVD. But I'm doing stuff.

We have a disease, but if you do what you're supposed to do, you will be fine. Because look at me. I'm 68, I'm still here and I'm doing it.

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