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Sep 10, 2009

Service dogs can sniff out danger for diabetics

10:01 AM

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CAPTION

Dogabetics

Some pooches are being trained to help people with diabetes stay tuned in to too-high or too-low blood sugar levels.

Ron and Jarod Pace of [Canyon Crest K9 Training Center](#) in Tacoma, Washington have taught a black Labrador to keep his nose attuned to 14-year-old Liam Kelly, who suffers from Type 1 diabetes, according to this [News Tribune](#) story.

The Paces taught Max to alert Kelly when his blood-sugar levels were too high (above 180 milligrams per deciliter) or too low (80 milligram per deciliter) by smelling different scents in his breath.

Knowing his blood-sugar level and keeping it close to normal helps Kelly prevent long-term physical complications.

Big dips in blood sugar can be dangerous short-term for Type 1 diabetics, and lead to confusion or fainting. Chronically high blood sugar levels have longer-term medical risks, including heart, nerve and vision complications.

A sweet, fruity scent indicates glucose is high, while a rusty, acidic smell suggests a dropped glucose level.

Lisa Kelly, Liam's mother, told the *Tribune*:

"Ron and Max have literally saved Liam's life and allowed him to feel he can participate in sports or anything he wants. After football camp, Max was alerting four or five times a day.

"Liam thought he was fine, but the dog knew otherwise."

Though there are differing opinions about whether or not these specially trained pups are effective and reliable at what they do, some families swear by them. The [Paces](#) are training other dogs to be vigilant about the danger signs for diabetics.

READERS: We've been writing a lot about how dogs help out humans. Any other examples you care to mention?

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[Dr. Shawn](#) (5 friends, [send message](#)) wrote: 9/10/2009 8:38:58 PM

It's amazing what our pets can do! Every day I have the good fortune to see how my dog and cat patients have the ability to heal naturally and recover from all sorts of

serious and even fatal problems. And of course, the rewards (medical, emotional, etc.) we receive from our furry friends make it all worthwhile. This article is another great reason to own a pet!

Dr. Shawn
www.petcarenaturally.com

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inthebiz (15 friends, [send message](#)) wrote: 9/10/2009 7:27:31 PM
Liam is very lucky to have Max....And, Max to have Liam.....Live it up! Enjoy life.

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CS72 (8 friends, [send message](#)) wrote: 9/10/2009 6:24:12 PM
As a recently diagnosed diabetic I have to say that this is fantastic! I love dogs!!

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Hope Floats (0 friends, [send message](#)) wrote: 9/10/2009 4:57:29 PM
I know this will sound odd, but at least a year before my husband was diagnosed I noticed a change in the way he smelled. I figured no one would listen to me if I mentioned it. It was very definitely a sweeter, almost too sweet, smell. My husband has always kidded me about my overly developed sense of smell.

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theresa99 (0 friends, [send message](#)) wrote: 9/10/2009 3:09:28 PM
What an awesome dog! You go, Liam!! Thanks USA Today, for such a nice story.

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GSmom (0 friends, [send message](#)) wrote: 9/10/2009 3:05:14 PM
To "Daisy-Downer:" This is a great benefit to them, it's not one-size-fits-all in the diabetic world. My 19-yr-old in college is non-diabetic hypoglycemic and doesn't always recognize if feeling funny or tired is from her sugars dropping, especially when she's sick from something else like a virus. So it would help young adults!

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pencil-pusher (0 friends, [send message](#)) wrote: 9/10/2009 2:46:23 PM
When my Dad came to live with us, he was befriended by our friendly old tomcat, Simba. We would wake Dad at 3am for a blood glucose reading as we struggled to stabilize his blood sugar. One morning around 2am, Dad got up complaining that the cat had waked him and would not leave him alone. He also mentioned that he felt "funny." My wife took his blood sugar and it was 54! He credited Simba with saving his life. Since then, Dad's blood sugar has stabilized and his health has improved, but the cat has rarely left his side!

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ESPNEWS (0 friends, [send message](#)) wrote: 9/10/2009 2:29:07 PM
Hi, I have a service dog because I am deaf. My dog is a rat terrier and his name is Pebo. He is always so helpful when someone is at the door. Pebo would run towards me and let me know that someone is at the door. Whenever there is any other noises, he always run towards me and lets me know. Pebo is aware that I am deaf and can read my sign language as well. He is amazing, very brilliant and a wonderful dog.

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tazjt (7 friends, [send message](#)) wrote: 9/10/2009 1:51:44 PM
Great story! Great dog!

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