Comics, eh? Always been something supremely special about them to us...
Beyond the fight of good v evil, the characters, their nuances, their similarities and relevance to life in general - has always been a fascinating cocktail. From Spiderman dealing with the angsts of a teenager to the ethos of a team as shown by the Avengers or indeed the saga of the X-Men, their rejection by society... Where does one even begin to explore their relevance?

As diabetes specialists, personal experience has taught us how difficult it can be to break the diagnosis of Type 1 diabetes to someone. That said, it is nothing compared to being the person receiving the diagnosis. It is often a shock to hear, leaving people upset and bewildered often for quite some time. For some there is anger, resentment and frustration. For others, there is relief that an answer has been found to explain their troubling symptoms. In most cases, with a few key adaptations to life, such as recognizing the essential need to administer insulin every day, it is possible to live a full, active life.

As comic and superhero fans, it seemed to us that there were some parallels between the times when a type 1 diabetes diagnosis is made and when a superhero discovers their powers for the first time. There is often shock and surprise among the feelings experienced in both situations, followed by acceptance and adaptation. Most heroes choose to keep their new life-changing situation a secret. Though it is a personal choice, there is no need for someone diagnosed and living with type 1 diabetes to ever feel that they need to hide this. Openness is encouraged to help promote wider understanding and dispel myths about type 1 diabetes. If one had to explore a parallel, think of the Incredible Hulk, learning to live with the powers yet the never ending search for a cure hanging in the offerings of the future... a search which carries on.

This all really started as an idea and I cannot thank enough:

...and a special thank you for the help and support of Portsmouth Hospitals NHS Trust and University Hospital Southampton NHS Foundation trust.

We hope you enjoy!

Partha and Mayank
Gary?

Sleeping in class again, Gary? You seem distracted as of late!

It's not like you but I will have to discipline this behaviour!

Extra homework tonight - maybe next time you might try and stay awake in my class.

Do it again and I will be forced to...

...give you detention and...

...contact your parents about your declining behaviour...

You Okay, Gary?

Gary?

Fine, Mr. Stern!

Saved by the bell, Gary!

And Gary - I want you to do up to 15 - maybe that will keep you from getting distracted in future!

Class - questions 1 to 10 for homework!

Huh? What the-?

...and Gary...

Class - questions 1 to 10 for homework!
Gary is a mild mannered 14 year old boy. He feels alone and hasn't very many friends except his friends from the books and comics he reads. Recently he has been noticing himself become more angry at things.

**Why do I always feel so tired in class,**

**Apart from Mr Stern being boring!**

**And why did I get so angry?**

**That new girl looked really scared!**

**But I am hungry now!!**

**GRRrr... You said dinner would be ready... You said...**

**STOP THIS, GARY!**

**This is no way to behave!**

**Up to your room now! Start your homework and I'll bring you a drink and your dinner when it's ready!**

**This isn't like him!**

**He's always been a good kid.**

**He never gets annoyed like that!**

**Do you think there is something wrong?**

**He hides away into his comics and video games!**

**I wish he had some friends!**

**Maybe that's what's wrong lately?**

**Listen to your Mother.**

**This is not fair! You don't have to treat me like a baby!**

**After dinner...**

This is not fair! You don't have to treat me like a baby! You said dinner would be ready... You said... You'll have to wait! We've been working and only getting to start on dinner now so it won't be for another while! Always a flair for the dramatic, Gary? I'm sure you'll be fine!

Gary is a mild mannered 14 year old boy. He feels alone and hasn't very many friends except his friends from the books and comics he reads. Recently he has been noticing himself become more angry at things.
In the morning...

Wake up, Gary!

You slept in and we are gonna be late to get you to school.

Later in first period...

Can you answer equation "B" on the board, Gary?

Huh... is it... Amm....

Hmm... is it... Amm....

First it was coming in late to my class.

Then I find out you did not complete your homework...

...and now you can't even answer a simple question on the board...

But, Mr Stern, I can't see the board, it's blurry...

I can't see - It's blurry...

First it was coming in late to my class.

Then I find out you did not complete your homework...

...and now you can't even answer a simple question on the board...

Lateeness, not doing homeworks and sleeping in class shows a lack of respect...

You are not trying to get out of this with playing sick - you have been playing up for a while now.

You have usually been well behaved but this must

GRRRR

GRRRR

I... HAYE... HAD... ENOUGH!!
You stood up then fainted and fell to the floor—here drink this!

It's okay—you are safe here...

...you are just in the school nurse's office.

Ughh— I have a sore head and feel really thirsty!

What happened?

I believe you were in Mr. Stern's maths class and it seems that you got light-headed and frustrated.

You stood up then fainted and fell to the floor—here drink this!

Thanks, nurse! So I didn't wreck the classroom? I thought I did worse than that...

...I'm so relieved!

I would like for you to go see your doctor as soon as possible.

I think I have an idea about why you fainted...

...I'm so relieved!

You are thirsty!

Hello, Gary, remember me? I'm Doctor Richards...

Like Doctor Reed Richards? A.K.A Mr Fantastic from the Fantastic Four?

Just like him but I look more like "the Thing" and even more fantastic!

HA HA HA

At the Doctor's Appointment.
Diabetes is just your body not being able to control the amount of sugar within the blood in your body!

Gary - You have... Type 1 Diabetes!

Gary - Don't worry, it's going to be fine...

When your blood sugar levels are over 13 and up for prolonged periods, ketones develop when there isn't a sufficient supply of insulin, or the insulin isn't working as it should, to allow glucose to be used by the cells for energy - this can make your blood acidic and therefore can make you very sick...

I am different from everyone else, I am like the X-Men, I'm like a mutant!

I have mutant blood - it makes me different. My blood is acidic...

...and if I don't control it I could harm myself or someone else!

...Or if it's very low, we need to boost it up with some fast-acting sugar!

But there's no need to be frightened - I will show you everything you need to start injecting yourself now!

The best thing you can do is to try and keep your blood sugar levels adequate by observing them.
A FEW DAYS LATER...

I CAN'T DO IT! IT'S TOO DIFFICULT AND SCARY.

C'MON NOW, GARY!

I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO...

YES YOU DO— YOU HAVE SEEN ME DO IT FOR YOU THE LAST FEW DAYS—I THINK YOU SHOULD TRY AND DO IT YOURSELF NOW!

DO IT THIS ONCE FOR ME!

ARRR— OKAY!

HERE GORS...

Yeah, I suppose it wasn't too bad.

That wasn't so bad, was it, Gary?

Gary, where are you running off to?

I DON'T WANT TO BE LATE FOR SCHOOL!

The thought of it is worse than actually doing it.

Yeah, I suppose it wasn't too bad.

I'M GLAD GARY IS BACK TO HIS SPRITELY SELF AGAIN.

He definitely seems happier these last few days!

Gary, where are you running off to?

Maybe even be early like I used to!

Bye!
If \( 18x = 72 \) then \( x = 4 \)!

Yeah I got it! The answer is 4!

100% on all your homework and answering very well in class!

Well done, Gary!

Thanks, Mr Stern.

Me too!

I'm glad you've turned over a new leaf as of late.

That's lunchtime!

Gary is like a new person, isn't he?

Everything is good!

Yeah and cute!
especially after having that chocolate at breaktime!


Wow my sugar levels are way too high! I need to take my insulin!

I hate doing this myself and especially in front of other people too.

Look at weirdo over there!

He's shooting up!

He's such a freak!

Huh?

Is he diseased? Maybe he has...

Enough!! Leave the kid alone!

Greg?

Don't worry Gary, they won't bother you--

Where's he running off to?

Sorry, Greg!

Yeah,yep,yep. I.make.things.confusing.and.fast.paced.and.can.make.you.feel.anxious.and.uncomfortable!!
Last class on a Friday...

...Let's push it to the limit!

C'mon, Gary!

Exhausted and a little woozy!

Just take it easy, okay...

I'll see you at the finish line!

...Hi, Gary...

Ah- I feel better already!

It's strange how my bloodsugar was high earlier and it went low so quickly!

Are you okay, Gary?

I can make everything slow and clouded and make you feel sick.

I am hyper...

I'll see you at the finish line!

I can make everything slow and clouded and make you feel sick.

...Hi, Gary...

I'm okay.

I need sugar!
DIABETES ONLINE FORUM: Type 1 Discussion thread.

**People online...**

- DiabeticGary407
- Batman616
- NonSugarbabe
- Hypo-nitist
- SugarfreeLady
- CaptainCanderel
- InsuLinda
- ParthalsTheMan
- DiabeticAvenger
- OldManLogan79

**DiabeticGary407:** Hi Guys. I'm Gary and I'm a newly diagnosed Type 1 diabetic. I just thought I'd stop by and say hello and ask if anyone has any advice for me.

**Batman616:** Hi Gary. Well you are doing the best thing so far: reaching out and asking for advice.

**DiabeticGary407:** Hi Batman616. Thanks. I am trying to find out more about how others live with the condition etc and I take it you like comics?

**Batman616:** I do indeed- Batman is the coolest! Actually I see Batman and all his wonderful gadgets and toys as like having diabetes.

**DiabeticGary407:** Hmm? What you mean?

**Batman616:** Like how diabetics always have their test kit with them. It's like Batman with his Utility Belt- he never leaves home without it and it can get him out of trouble when he needs it. Even Ironman's Arc reactor in his chest is seen like an insulin pump that regulates and keeps him alive! But I do think the best power is talking to people- it's the best way to realize how your condition affects others.

**OldManLogan79:** For some people maybe, but I've never really met anyone with diabetes and haven't really talked to anyone about the condition- I look after myself and I seem to do just fine!

**DiabeticGary407:** Maybe I should do both- look after myself but also get advice!! I will pick all your brains if you don't mind, guys, about diabetes and more likely comics too lol

**Batman616:** Hi Gary. Well you are doing the best thing so far- reaching out and asking for advice.

**DiabeticGary407:** Hmm? What you mean?

**OldManLogan79:** Typing...
Friday Evening

I can't wait to read these new Avengers and X-Men comics!

Hey Gary!! There he is—the Ultimate Fighting Champion, who hit the mat before he could hit anything else... HAHAA!

What do you mean?

We all thought that he was going to knock Mr. Stern the other day in class!

But lucky for Stern he popped a circuit and fainted.

He was really gonna knock him out even though he ended up like a chump on the ground.

You were gonna knock Stern out?

That deserves a drink—here go, Gary!

You were the Ultimate fighting Champion, who hit the mat before he could hit anything else...

No thanks—I don't drink!

Go on Gary, we thought you were a geek and a coward until now! Don't go backwards now we think you are sort of cool—take the can!

Ummm...
Oh No!
I forgot my test kit and I haven't taken my insulin. I haven't eaten either. Is this what it feels like when my body produces that acidic stuff!
I wish I had listened more closely to Dr Richards now!

Little bit later...

Right, guys, I feel woozy! I have to go- thanks for the drink!
Same bat channel next weekend, Gary?

Oh No! I forgot my test kit and I haven't taken my insulin.
I haven't eaten either. Is this what it feels like when my body produces that acidic stuff!
I wish I had listened more closely to Dr Richards now!

What the-?

What is this?
What is happening to me? Ketones!

What do I do? I'm sick, dizzy and anxious? Help!

This isn't our doing. This is what happens when you don't look after yourself!

They are taking over my body and poisoning just like Spider-Man's symbiote.

BEEP BEEP BEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEP

BEEP BEEP

HELP!!!
Thank Goodness! Wake up! He's waking up! Gary, can you hear me? He's waking up! Thank Goodness! I'm so glad he's alright! Hmghnnh... Where am I? Where am I? Where- Where- He'll be okay! But not if he continues like this... Where am I? I'm Director Richards of H.E.A.L.E.D. I'm Director Richards of H.E.A.L.E.D. ...Healthy Eating And Living Education for Diabetics... ...Healthy Eating And Living Education for Diabetics... ...And you are on the H.E.A.L.E.D. Helicarrier... ...And we are here to help you!
A little later...

You can’t let things like that happen again – it’s very dangerous you could have died!

There’s a lot to remember and it is hard to control.

You can’t let things like that happen again – it’s very dangerous you could have died!

I knows it is hard, it takes practice but I want you to go to talk with others with diabetes.

They have made all these mistakes, and with their advice – you won’t have to.

A few days later...

It’s like a club of people just like you! Like the X-men?

HaHa yeah, pretty much!

You don’t have to handle all this alone.

You don’t have to handle all this alone.

Just like the X-men but these heroes have diabetes too!

And they are here to help you!

Awesome!
This is Gary!

Hi, Guys!

Hi Everyone! I want you all to meet a newbie to the group!

This is Gary!

Hi, Guys!
Hello, Gary!

Mr. Stern? You have diabetes too?

I've been diabetic for years!

Gary? Are you "DiabeticGary407" from the online forum?

Yeah...

I'm Batman616!!

Oh! Hit! I didn't think... You need to get a better handle!

Everyone is diabetic there!

Gary? You have diabetes too?

I've been diabetic for quite a while! I keep it under control!

And you too, Greg? But you are sporty and fit.

Me? Of course! You know when your bloods drop because you are hungry therefore I could help you and show you how to control yours.

Ah Insulin pump!

Why else do you think I can be grumpy sometimes before lunch? I'm always 'hangry'!

You know when your bloods drop because you are hungry therefore that's when I turn into a big grouch monster! I'm glad you are here and it's good to see you looking a bit more yourself.

Hangry?

That's when I turn into a big grouch monster! I'm glad you are here and it's good to see you looking a bit more yourself.

It's nice to meet you in person.

You too, ahh...

Gemma! I'll talk to you in a bit!

Gary?

I'll talk to you in a bit!

Everyone is diabetic there!

Hangry?

Everyone is diabetic there!!

You need to get a better handle!
Sarah?!

Oh- Sorry

I think my diabetes made me start to hypo a bit.

Hehe

Don't worry, Gary- I'm just pulling your leg!

...You never met me at the finish line!

I wanted to ask you if you wanted to hang out over the weekend with me but you never showed up.

...But here we are now!

We can hang out here and maybe do something later!

If that's cool?

Yeah sure, Sarah, that sounds very cool!

Hey, Gary...
I gotta go!

Do you think you'll be fine here alone?

Ahhh...

Yeah, I'm sure I'll be fine...

I'm not alone, not anymore!

Not the End...

Not the End...

...Only the Beginning!
Like Gary in the **Type 1: Origins Comic**, you may feel like all this is a lot to think about or you want to know more about living with Type 1 Diabetes; there are plenty of resources online that help you and your parents or guardians. Check out some, or all, of these great online platforms below:

- **T1resources.uk** (Website)
- **GBDOC** (Website, Twitter and Facebook)
- [@OurDiabetes](https://twitter.com/OurDiabetes) (Twitter)
- **Diabetes UK** (Website, Twitter and Facebook)
- **JDRF UK** (Website, Twitter and Facebook)
- **Input Diabetes** (Website, Twitter and Facebook)
- **Diabetics with Eating Disorders** - (Website, Twitter and Closed Facebook Group)
- **Parents of Type 1 Teens** (Facebook)
- **Type 1 Diabetic Teens** (Facebook)
- **Type 1 diabetes family** (Facebook)
- [@BeyondType1](https://twitter.com/BeyondType1) (Twitter and Community Forum App)
- **Type 1 Diabetes Information and Support** (Facebook)

**Type 1 Resources** which pulls together links to forums, blogs, websites, youtube videos and much more from other Type1 sites for people with Type1 to use. This site will go live in September 2016 so make sure you check that out!

But if you can’t get online or have difficulties it’s good to know that most areas will have either a diabetes clinic in their local hospital or there will be clinics held at your own GP surgery.

The best way to find informative literature for those who aren’t using the internet is to go to your local clinic and ask the clinicians for any leaflets or info booklets, or pick them up in clinic waiting rooms.

Another useful way to find out what you need is ‘word of mouth’. In the UK there is no set reading material that health care professionals have to give out to anyone newly diagnosed, but talking to other people with diabetes or other health care professionals or simply talking to your friends or parents can help too.

Find what way is best for you to learn to look after yourself and use that to live a full and happy life.