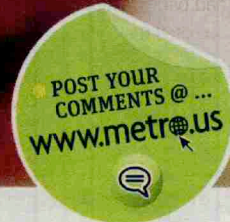
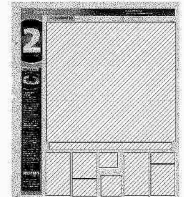




▶ Diabetics are burdened with constant maintenance of their disease.



# The 'do it yourself' disease



## With reports suggesting that the number of Americans with diabetes could double or triple by 2050, one sufferer says that a community can help the individual diabetic cope

The headlines about a recent government report that projects the number of Americans with diabetes to double or triple by 2050 have stunned the American public. As more efforts are taken to prevent that prediction from becoming a reality, one type 1 diabetes sufferer says that an online community can help.

Howard Steinberg is the CEO of **dLife.com**, a site dedicated to teaching those with diabetes how to manage the disease while also creating a network of people that fosters support and encouragement.

"I believe that diabetes is a behavioral disease," says Steinberg. "If everyone can adapt to a certain kind of behavior, they could get very close to normalizing their blood sugar or getting their diabetes in much tighter control — and therefore dramatically

reducing the consequences and complications of diabetes: heart disease, blindness, kidney disease, amputation and a shorter life span."

Unlike many other diseases, Steinberg notes that diabetes is a "self-managed" illness, since sufferers of both types must keep a diligent watch of their blood-sugar levels.

"You cannot depend on a physician," he says. "Ultimately, diabetes is a do-it-yourself disease. With a condition that's about managing behavior and lifestyle, you have to be engaged and you have to be your own self-manager."

Having been diagnosed with type 1 in 1969 at 10 years old, Steinberg notes the dramatic improvements that have been made for those with diabetes — not the least of which is the greater sense of community that's fostered by sites like his own.

"Socially, we used to live

with these conditions more secretively. There was feeling of weakness in having a chronic disease. There was no social support," he says. "In every way, it was the dark ages of medicine. Diabetes has come a long way in that regard — but tragically, we're only getting more and more cases and we're not seeing enough improvement in the people who do have it." ● METRO

### Quoted

**"You have to be your own self-manager."**

STEINBERG

# 20

**According to the American Diabetes Association, someone is diagnosed with diabetes every 20 seconds.**