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World's longest-living diabetic celebrates 90th birthday

Winsome Johnston, believed to be the longest-living diabetic in the world, has a few wise words for young people disheartened by a type-one diabetes diagnosis.

"If you manage it right and be consistent, you can live a long and happy life," she said.

The great grand-mother has just celebrated her 90th birthday, surrounded by friends and family at her retirement home in New Lynn.

Winsome was diagnosed with type-one diabetes at the age of six.

An application has been made to the Guinness Book of World Records to have her officially recorded as the longest-living diabetic in history.

Waitemata DHB Diabetes Clinical Nurse Specialist Rab Burtun has monitored Winsome's condition for the past 15 years.

He says she has never missed a single appointment or blood test, even though she needs blood tests up to six times-a-day.

"She is truly a remarkable woman and an absolute role model for anyone coming to terms with having type-one diabetes and struggling to find motivation to maintain a healthy lifestyle," he says.

"I find, especially for young people, that it can be difficult to comprehend the importance of managing your diabetes well. I speak about Winsome to all my patients as the gold-standard of the long and fulfilling life you can lead with diabetes."

Residents in the Waitemata district have the longest life-expectancy in the country at 84.1 years. The national average is 81.7 years.

Maori life-expectancy for Waitemata residents is also the highest in the country at 80.9 years. The national average is 75.6 years.



Caption: Winsome Johnston, 90, with Waitemata DHB Diabetes Clinical Nurse Specialist.

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