



# 'Change the stigma'

**Devina believes we need to talk and create awareness about NCDs**

By WANSHIKA KUMAR

IT is important to understand what people with non-communicable diseases are going through and create a friendly environment for them.

This was the advice by the mother of Namish Chaudary, the youngest Type 1 diabetic patient, Devina Chaudary.

The mother of two said her seven-year-old son got diagnosed with Type 1 diabetes on November 19, 2017, marking a turning point in their lives.

"One week before he would turn three, he was diagnosed with diabetes," she said.

"It all started with tummy pain and upon taking him to the hospital, they said it was a normal virus but after a few days his condition deteriorated as he started having breathing problem and his body was ice-cold, so we took him to Colonial War Memorial Hospital where he got diagnosed.

"After diagnosis, he went into a coma for three days, and it was lucky and a blessing that he came out well."

The 34-year-old said they had to spend almost one month in the hospital for her son's treatment.

"Hearing the news of his diagnosis, we were very shocked and shattered because no one in our family had diabetes and at that time, there was not much awareness held in Fiji on Type 1 diabetes.

"We were shocked, but we had to face it because it's something that you have to live with throughout the rest of your life.

"So we followed whatever the doctors said, we joined the hub centres and did our own readings and research to be informed.

"He was just three, so he didn't even know how to handle low sugar, and he had to have a lot of hypoglycaemia, but gradually it has decreased like now it's once a month depending on his emotions.

"Over the years, he has learned a lot, and now he sometimes gets his insulin shots by himself and recognises his low sugars.

"When I was pregnant, my doctor was Dr James Fong, and he knew about Namish's situation.

"His advice was - 'to live with type 1 diabetes is just to keep your life simple' and that's how we are until now.

"We are not depriving him of



Devina Chaudary, 37, with her son Namish Chaudary, seven, at their home in Suva yesterday. Picture: JONA KONATACI

anything, but everything is given in limit."

She acknowledged the support rendered by his teachers and the doctors.

She encouraged people to change the stigma evolving around diabetes and other NCDs.

"There are some parents who don't open up about their children's condition and get involved as there is a stigma that if their children are out, then everyone will humiliate them or some blame their children for the change in lifestyles.

"Our public is very ill-informed, so we need to talk and create awareness.

"To everyone - have a healthy life, exercise, keep a watch on your diet and even if you get diagnosed with NCD, then follow all the health measures.

"When it comes to NCDs, people just don't need to blame the person who is suffering, you try and understand what actually caused it, how can you make a good comforting environment for that person while taking care of your health at the same time."



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- Devina Chaudary



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