

Diabetic Bicyclists Take Extra Precautions to Conquer the Great Ohio Bicycle Adventure

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Pediatric endocrinologist, Doug Rogers, MD, of the Cleveland Clinic advises any adult (13 and older) with diabetes who is interested in riding in the annual Great Ohio Bicycle Adventure (GOBA) to “just do it!”

GOBA is a yearly event that sends over 3,000 bicyclists on a tour of different regions of Ohio. Participants ride approximately 50 miles a day over a seven-day period. For the past twelve years, Dr. Rogers has led a group of teenagers and young adults with diabetes on this trip. The group is from Camp Ho Mita Koda, a camp for children with diabetes located in Newbury, Ohio (25 miles east of Cleveland), where Dr. Rogers serves as the Medical Director. The camp’s residential programs are only available for children up to age 15, so the Bicycle Adventure is a good activity for young camp alumni. Adults with diabetes who did not attend Camp Ho Mita Koda are welcome to participate with the camp group as well.

For riders with diabetes, biking 50-miles a day is a long day, and requires even more preparation compared to other bikers. Those riding with Dr. Rogers pack a bottle of Gatorade and a bottle of water, as well as a plethora of snacks for the ride. “The riders have to check their blood glucose frequently, a minimum of 6 times daily. [Riders] also have to eat a lot more food than they are used to,” said Rogers. Riders using insulin pumps adjust the easiest, Rogers said. “We basically cut the basal insulin in half and then adjust the mealtime insulin as needed.”

Biking 50-miles each day can be overwhelming, “but you have all day, so you can ride at a leisurely pace,” Rogers said. Riders get up around 6:30am. Each rider packs up their own gear and tent and loads it on a semi-truck to be taken to the next stop. There is a morning snack stop, a lunch stop and an afternoon snack stop. “Each rider rides with a buddy from our group, no one rides alone,” according to Rogers. “Once we reach the next overnight stop, we locate our gear and tents, set up the tents, then shower and eat supper” Rogers said. “We then usually tour the town we are staying in the evening and go to bed as the sun sets around 9:30pm.”

In his years leading the trip, Dr. Rogers has learned many things. Rogers said his riders are tough and can accomplish anything they put their minds to. “[Teenagers] can also be very stubborn and sometimes you just need to let them figure things out for themselves,” said Rogers.

The 2007 Great Ohio Bicycle Adventure will take place from June 16-23. For more information, or to sign up to participate with Camp Ho Mita Koda’s group, please visit www.CampHoMitaKoda.org or call (216) 591-0800. If you’re unsure if you want to take the Great Ohio Bicycle Adventure challenge, take Dr. Rogers advice and “Just Do It!”