

# Vicky gets lifeline

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HELEN Kavasilas' eyes begin to redden and her voice begins to break as she gazes at her seven-year-old daughter Vicky in the kitchen of their Blacktown home.

Vicky is jumping down with pure joy and excitement, a picture of health and happiness.

It is a far cry from the days when Mrs Kavasilas had to strap Vicky down to give her one of the several insulin injections needed to manage her type 1 diabetes every day.

No longer is Mrs Kavasilas' life ruled by the clock, her time splintered by the constant checking of sugar and insulin levels and regular food intake.

In the back of her mind there always lurked the possibility of Vicky lapsing into a coma.

Their lives changed forever nearly 18 months ago, when Vicky was introduced to an insulin pump.

The pump, worn 24 hours a day, even days a week, constantly supplies Vicky with insulin, voiding the needles.

"It was constant," Mrs Kavasilas recalled, a mixture of frustration, strain and relief welling in her eyes.

"Vicky had two needles in the morning and one in the afternoon after school."

Mrs Kavasilas is backing the juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation's call for the Federal Government to include the pump in the Australian National Diabetes Services Scheme, which subsidises older, traditional type 1 diabetes treatments.

Only families who have top private health insurance, such as



the Kavasilas family, or have a spare \$6000 to \$8000 can access the pumps.

The foundation's chief executive officer, Mike Wilson, said: "In addition to alleviating the intrusive daily regime of diet management and insulin injections, they help minimise dangerous fluctuations in blood sugar that can result in long-term health complications such as blindness, heart

disease, kidney failure, limb amputation and coma.

"We regularly speak to families who are desperate to give their child the best possible chance of living without the burden of diabetes but just can't afford the money required for a pump."

Vicky, still bouncing about the kitchen, proudly pulls up her T-shirt to show the pump, attached to her stomach.

**Vicky Kavasilas, 7, has had her life changed by a simple piece of advanced medical technology.**

Picture: ISABELLA LETTINI  
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