



Marathon walk to find a cure

Living with diabetes has more than a few challenges

Health | Jenny Ling

LIVING with type 1 diabetes is tough enough without being mistakenly criticised for causing the condition as well.

So Elsternwick teenager Brooke Dillon, who has the autoimmune disease, is right behind Alex Williams' daring attempt to complete a six-day marathon across the desert to educate people about the condition.

The 52-year-old is also raising money for research into a cure by undertaking the Marathon Des Sables in April.

"There's so much prejudice towards type 2 diabetics," Ms Dillon said.

"People think they (type 1 and 2) are the same thing, they get confused and think I brought the disease on myself."

Dubbed the "toughest foot race on earth" the 243km marathon across the Sahara Desert in Morocco takes six days in harsh conditions with temperatures of 45C.

For Mr Williams it will be a life and death challenge as he will have to manage his blood glucose levels which, left untreated, could lead to a coma or worse.

Ms Dillon, 19, was diagnosed when she was four and said even average rises in body tem-

perature, caused by shopping at Chadstone or going to the beach, were enough to send her into "hypos".

Mr Williams hopes to raise more than \$100,000 for the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation.

Foundation chief executive Mike Wilson said the causes of type 1 were not related to an unhealthy diet or obesity.

Environmental and genetic factors that were not well understood were causing the number of cases to rise by 3 per cent every year in Australia.



Type 1 diabetes sufferer Brooke Dillon is pleased Alex Williams is walking the Sahara desert to raise funds for a cure

Picture: JASON SAMMON. N35CK31