



Type 1 diabetes - a long-term condition

Living with an insulin pump

We found out about the pump from researching on the internet, and the pump basically is attached to me 24 hours a day, I take it off for showering. I put a new needle in every two days, it's a really small needle, it sticks to my body, and then I attach it to the pump, and I can just push more insulin into myself without even looking at the pump, I just click a couple of buttons, so it's quite discreet, and it's constantly putting insulin into me rather than having to inject a base of insulin and then inject extra when I'm having a meal. So I've got a constant baseline of insulin and then I put in extra for every meal I'm having so it's better control, I don't have the same amount of pain because I can stagger my injection period so, instead of doing one big injection, I could have 30 units of insulin over 45 minutes or an hour, so I've got a lot more control over how long it takes, and that gives me better control overall with my carbohydrate counting and, and making sure that my sugar levels stay at a better place.

And we had to fight to get the pump, I wasn't supposed to have it, when you're given the pump you're meant to have low sugar levels, which you'll find that you're having a lot of hypo's, whereas I found that I had very, very high sugar levels, so we had to convince them that this was the right move for me, and with the pump as well, it's a little bit more expensive, not everyone likes it, it's a lot of effort to put people on to it, there has to be training and I think it's just sort of they thought maybe you won't use it properly, it was not the right move for you.

Eventually we did get it, but they didn't train me properly, they weren't encouraging of me meeting any other diabetics with pumps particularly and, in the end, we had to phone up a research centre and they heard our story, my Mum and my story, and felt sorry for me, and said that they would talk to someone they knew, a professor who actually turned out to be one of the top professors in the country, and I moved hospital.

And at this hospital I was given immediate psychiatric support, as was my Mum. I have a professor who I see every time, I've got a nurse who I can contact any time, it's the same nurse, you know, even the receptionist knows my name, she knows who I am, and it was that support, I feel, that made me feel so much better, made me feel like I could get better, and a mixture of that support and having the pump has gradually meant that I've managed to get my sugar levels under control. So it does just show you how important having that medical support, and people being positive with you, does really help when you, when you're struggling.