

Pru's Story June 2021

Service name Out- patient Dietetics

Main purpose of service

The service is based at Princess Royal Health Centre. All patients are assessed, treated and advised during clinic or telephone appointments. The service receives referrals for people who are registered with a Huddersfield GP and who need the expertise of a dietitian. Patients are referred to the service for dietary advice related to a wide variety of conditions including Diabetes, Irritable Bowel Syndrome and Coeliac Disease.



About the person

Pru was referred to a Gastroenterologist due to bloating and stomach pain and was diagnosed with Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS). The NHS website describes IBS as a common condition that affects the digestive system. It can cause problems with cramps, bloating, diarrhoea and constipation. <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/irritable-bowel-syndrome-ibs/> It was suggested that Pru see a dietitian to help explore what food triggered her symptoms.

Making changes

Pru admits she was expecting a dietitian to simply tell her to stop eating certain food **“or to cook difficult recipes – but she never did.”** Sarah, one of Locala's dietitians asked Pru to keep a food diary. **“It was only when I wrote things down that I realised how little I was drinking. On some days I had a drink at about 6pm, then didn't drink anything again until 11.30am the next day. Some days, when I was busy, I'd only have 1 drink all day.”** Sarah advised Pru to drink 2 litres of fluid a day to **“flush the gut out”** and to avoid becoming dehydrated. **“That has been the hardest part – 2 litres is a lot! It still is the hardest task.”** Pru finds drinking water unappealing, so adds a little cordial or fresh orange juice. She has found other ways to make changes, such as having lactose free milk and cutting back on cakes and sweets. **“You can't cut things you enjoy out completely – it's about having treats. Things in moderation. You have to enjoy life! You can eat normal food, it's just going about it the right way.”**

5 A Day

Sarah advised Pru to increase the amount of fibre in her diet, gradually increasing the amount of fruit and vegetables she was eating. As a busy person who works outside all day, Pru now plans her food in advance, relying less on crisps and sugary snacks, and enjoying bananas and fruit loaf as healthy alternatives. She has started to prepare her packed lunch before she goes to work - sandwiches include salad now as well as other fillings - and makes sure she drinks enough.

Lifestyle

Pru says that from day one, Sarah's advice made a difference. **“I had started to hate going out to eat. The stomach pain was awful. I'd be bending over with gripe. I'd have an hour to get home to get to the toilet. Then after I'd feel so thirsty.”** Pru describes her new eating regime as a lifestyle change. **“You think it's a bit of a myth, but food does matter. You don't have to rustle up fancy recipes, just as long as you get the veg in.”** Pru would encourage anyone with similar symptoms to see a dietitian, **“Everything feels better.”**