

Tracie'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

Tracie was diagnosed with Type 1 Diabetes in the 1980's. At first, she was supported by health care services and Tracie learned to live independently with the condition. She attended the 'Dose Adjustment For Normal Eating' (DAFNE) course, which teaches people how to balance insulin regimes with food intake. Tracie says, **"It was amazing, really invaluable, but it was years ago."** Recently Tracie had a change of GP and during a routine health review, it was suggested that she should be referred to the Diabetes Nursing team. Tracie says that she had **"fallen out of the loop"** and needed up to date advice and information. The Diabetic Nurse suggested that Tracie should talk with a Dietitian again.



Patterns

Tracie explains that although she has always been active and keen to exercise, during lockdown she and her husband started going for longer walks. **"We started walking further and I was having hypo's [hypoglycaemia - when blood sugars drop too low]. I started to take a backpack full of food! I wasn't frightened, but more frustrated. I was taking more and more food! I started to avoid remote places."** Vanessa, one of Locala's Dietitians, sent Tracie a food diary prior to their first appointment. Tracie says, **"I couldn't see any patterns, but Vanessa pointed out where she could see patterns."**

Guidance

Tracie says, **"Vanessa explained how different types of exercise can impact on your blood glucose levels very differently."** An information sheet was sent to Tracie **"which made things a lot clearer."** Vanessa advised that if Tracie was exercising within two hours of eating, she should reduce her insulin dose by 50%. This would reduce the risk of 'hypo's'. **"I found I was overtreating myself when having hypo's. Vanessa reminded me of the correct treatments and amounts, such as eating 3-4 jelly babies or a small can of pop and waiting 10-15 minutes before rechecking that my blood glucose levels had returned to normal."**

Tracie has followed Vanessa's advice and says, **"We walked every day on holiday and I didn't have one hypo."** She continues, **"I think as you get a bit older, you get more anxious about things. I just needed that guidance and help."**

Freedom

Tracie believes that many people who live independently with long term conditions can miss out on receiving new advice. She recommends finding out how health services can help and suggests that services should do more to promote their work. **"You forget what services are out there – you just crack on with life."** Tracie's Diabetes Nurse Jenny has introduced Tracie to new equipment that can monitor her blood and has helped set up a prescription for the items Tracie needs. As for following Vanessa's Dietetic advice, Tracie describes how she feels, **"I have a sense of freedom again to go out and do what I enjoy!"**