

Basal insulins – how to adjust your dose

How to discover (or adjust) your basal insulin dose

You can do this in any order, but you do **need to be methodical and keep records**. It isn't usually achieved within days. Take comfort that once you do get it 'about right' the fine-tuning dose adjustment process becomes simpler.

If you start with overnight – it makes the other ones look easy. But it is less daunting to start with the morning and gradually work through the day and evening – by the time you get to 'overnight' you'll be familiar with the process.

Daytime

Get up, test your BS, take any medications you require including basal insulin if that's when you normally take it.

- **Do not take any fast-acting insulin.**
- **Do not eat breakfast.**
- **Test mid-morning and prior to lunch.**

If your basal dose is correct, your BS by lunchtime should be within approx 10% of what it was when you got up.

If not take more or less basal insulin – never adjust by more than 2 units up or down.

Repeat the 'miss breakfast' test at least 3 days again, to see if it's right. Keep repeating this until it is more or less right.

Make sure you are happy that that bit is right, then ...

- do the same again but miss lunch.
- your pre-lunch and pre-dinner readings should be similar now.
- do exactly the same pre-dinner, missing dinner
- and pre-bed.

Then move on to overnight.

Night time

Test before bed (as normal), take any pre-bed medications, including long-acting insulin, if that's when you take it.

- do not eat any carbohydrate
- do not take any fast acting insulin.

Ideally you would set your alarm-clock to go off every 2 hours and test your BS and record it every time throughout the night. In practice...

- set it once to go off between 2.30am and 3.15am.
- test when it wakes you
- go back to sleep till your normal time.

- test again then (as normal)

Your BS now should be roughly similar (+/- 1.7) to what it was last night. If it isn't – what happened at 3 am?

- Is there too much insulin or not enough?
- Is that because your dose is too high or too low?
- or has it 'peaked' at the wrong time for you?

To get it right you might find you have to alter the timing of your injections(s) instead of – or as well as – changing the actual amount of insulin you take.

Don't worry about trying to 'fine tune it' – that should come later once you are on an even keel.