

## 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.*