

I constantly question my actions on the day she was diagnosed. Being a nurse in medicine I was fully aware of the symptoms of diabetes, and the significance of ketones in urine. Why did I ignore the symptoms, why did I try to ignore ketones in her urine? Denial I think.

Claudette started to 'change' in the summer holidays of 2007. She was admitted with a chronic staph infection in her nose. The ENT surgeon couldn't understand why she has such a chronic infection. They operated to remove some of the infection six weeks later it returned. No bloods were taken at this point everyone just confused why she had a re occurring infection.

Late November she started to become very tired, moody. My cheerful energetic daughter seemed to have disappeared. At swimming she was getting slower and slower. She had a gymnastic county squad trial and kept falling over, couldn't co-ordinate her feet. Couldn't catch the equipment. She would cry every morning saying she was tired and didn't want to go to school.

I started to get angry with her she seemed to put no effort into anything and moaned, cried or lost her temper at everything.

Christmas came and went she became even more lethargic, complained of headaches, blurred vision, feeling sick after eating. The first week of the New Year things became unbearable I struggled to get her out of the bed in the mornings, she became even more moody. She started to drink constantly. (I even told her off for drinking so much and spoiling her dinner.)

The first swimming session after the Xmas holiday she stood on pool side. My chin hit the floor her weight loss was so obvious all skin and bone, (lost nearly 2 stone) she could hardly do a length in the pool.

The day she returned to school I smelt ketones on her breath, she complained of a headache, said she couldn't see properly. I still sent her to school! Whilst at work my mind returned to all her symptoms weight loss, excessive drinking, and ketones on her breath. My heart sank it could only be diabetes.

I asked my boss for the day off, took a urine test strip bottle home. I waited until school had finished!! On picking her up she could hardly put one foot in front of the other the smell of ketones was overwhelming. The test strip turned the darkest colour for glucose and ketones. That was then I realised our lives were about to change. I could feel the panic, fear and sorrow rising through me. I instantly thought of all the diabetics I had cared for the, amputations, blindness, renal failure and even those that had died of DKA. Is this what the future held for my beautiful daughter?

I rang the GP surgery at 3pm to say my daughter had glucose and ketones in her urine. They returned my call at 6pm told not to worry and come to the surgery first thing in the morning. I agreed .can't believe now that I did. 8pm that night the GP rang me back and said she had spoken to the hospital for more advice and they were expecting us. So glad we did, her gases showed that she had just become acidosis and grossly dehydrated. Reading on monitor was Hi and venous blood glucose 36. Think if we had left her for the night the outcome would have been very different.

Claudette's reaction is what will stay with me forever. She sobbed and sobbed kept asking what had she done so wrong and that she must have been really naughty to have got it. Why couldn't she be normal like her friends she tried to run off the ward saying she just wanted to die? She repeated this over and over again she finally fell asleep sobbing to the words why can't I just be normal?

Even though I knew all the signs symptoms I still ignored them. Knew the seriousness of ketones but still went with the Doctors advice. Am I mad at myself, you bet? What kind of nurse and mother am I to have ignored it all? Luckily my daughter has adjusted reasonably well with her diabetes. Not sure I have. My stance of sticking my head in the sand could have resulted in her no longer being with us. It has turned our lives upside down. My husband really struggled to accept the diagnosis and even appeared to be mad at me for testing her urine. I felt he blamed me that she had it because I tested her. Thankfully we got passed the initial shock of the diagnosis but still ask the question why? And always will do.

