

Well ours isn't as horrendous as some people's experiences, but still seems so recent and raw all the same. Deep breath and here goes.....

We celebrated Jess' 1st birthday on 20th June 2007. She had a Cadbury chocolate buttons cake with a chocolate 'Happy Birthday' plaque in the middle. That was also the day my sister finally talked me into booking a flight for my best friend's 40th weekend in Majorca. The rest of the group had booked their flights in April, but I was so scared of leaving the kids. It was only Friday to Sunday, but I must have thought of every possible thing that could go wrong in my absence.....or at least I thought I'd thought of everything.

A few weeks later, in July, Jess was called for her MMR jab. She was fine after it. Gave the token spoon of Calpol as you do, but no adverse reactions.

Saturday 18th August was the day of our first 'proper' family holiday together since Jess was born. A week away in a caravan in Tenby. We all had a really great time....Abi still asks when we are going back. On the Thursday night, I noticed a couple of dodgy looking spots. Friday morning confirmed my suspicions....chicken pox. We headed back home on the Friday night rather than wait till the Saturday morning. There's something about being at home when you're ill isn't there.

She had the chicken pox quite bad. I always thought the younger the more mild they got it, but Jess definitely had it worse than Abi had when she'd caught those aged 3. A couple of weeks later as the pox cleared up we noticed that Jess had thrush around the groin area. I took her to the doctors & got cream. We kept applying the cream & changed her nappies more regularly etc but it didn't seem to be clearing. When I took Jess to nursery I told them I'd been using the cream as instructed, but that it seemed to be taking a while to clear & that I was going to take her back to the doctors to see if I could get some stronger cream. I did that & got some more cream. I felt embarrassed, both at nursery & at the doctors, thinking they'd think I wasn't looking after her properly or couldn't be bothered putting the cream on when I was supposed to. Why else wouldn't it be clearing up?

The days merge a little in my memory here. I remember collecting Jess from nursery & some throwaway comment about the amount of juice she'd drunk that day. And then I noticed the wet nappies. More than wet, I mean saturated. Sometimes, in a matter of an hour she could have leaked through to her clothes. I think it was then I started 'googling' and got that neurotic mother feeling. I knew drinking lots & weeing lots were symptoms of diabetes, but if she was thirsty & drinking lots then it followed she was obviously going to wee lots. Then I saw the bit about thrush being a symptom because of high levels of sugar in the urine. My stomach lurched.... much as it is doing now. (Every second still seems so real, like it was yesterday.) It was a Friday. I remember that because I thought why do these things always happen on a

Friday? I have to wait till Monday for an appointment now. Danny thought I was getting worked up over nothing. I suppose because having seen his brother grow up with diabetes, he didn't want to even contemplate the possibility that it could happen to his own child.

On Monday, I took Jess to the doctors. I explained about the thirst, the wet nappies, and the thrush

& the family history and questioned 'could it be.....?' The doctor said it wasn't diabetes as she looked far too well & healthy, but that she would send Jess for a blood test to 'rule it out' and 'put your mind at rest'.

On the Wednesday morning we took Jess for her blood test. They did a proper blood test taking from the vein in her arm. I held her on my knee & squeeze her for dear life, feeling guilty as hell that it was my fault she was having to have this done. I'd asked for it.

On the Saturday I went into town with Jess & Abi. I had changed Jess immediately before we left, but after only a couple of shops she was soaked. I changed her nappy & we had to go back home because her jeans so wet. And in that moment I knew. I felt sick & it was all I could do to get back to the car without crying.

At 9am on Monday 24th September I phoned the doctors. The nurse wasn't in yet to give out any results. I said I'd phone back in the afternoon. At about 12.30pm my phone lit up with a message from Danny. It just said 'ring me'. (That sick feeling again.) The nurse had phoned him & told him to get Jess straight to Paeds A&E where they were waiting for us. I garbled some nonsense to my manager & ran out.

An hour later & they did a finger prick test which simply said 'HI'. (Why, oh why, couldn't they just have done that the week before at the GP's. It terrifies me to think how different things could have ended up in that week that passed between the doctors appointment & being admitted.) In came the consultant who confirmed diabetes & explained we would be moved up to the ward. He finished with 'this is going to be a huge life change for all of you'. How right he was.

I suppose we were lucky to have got the diagnosis while Jess was still well and before she'd lost much weight etc, but lucky isn't the word you'd choose to link to any diagnosis is it.

We spent 16 days on the ward as Jess developed a tummy bug while she was in there & wouldn't eat. After starting on insulin, it was actually stopped again for 6 days. At this point Danny's brother (the diabetic, you'd think he'd know better!) asked us 'Are you sure she's got diabetes? She can't have if she doesn't need insulin'. Hardly the most helpful comment under the circumstances!

It was during those 16 days that the 'Majorca' trip happened which obviously I didn't go on. There's my other big 'what if'. What if Jess hadn't been diagnosed & I'd gone? The times I imagined myself sat in a foreign airport desperate to get home because my little girl had been rushed into hospital. Thank god it never came to that.

Sorry, I've really gone on there haven't I. I couldn't leave anything out because every one of those details is part of it for me.

