

We were extremely lucky in that Owain didn't get really ill (in fact I remember that as being the one positive thing I clung to through all the fear, upset and upheaval of that time).

He was 4, and had always been skinny and a picky eater. It was the school holidays (between Nursery and Reception), and we were travelling by car to the Vendee in SW France. Every break in the journey, Owain would guzzle a carton of orange or apple juice and ask for more (very unusual for him, as he normally wouldn't drink enough, but it was hot so we didn't think anything of it). Then of course he was peeing all the time, but we thought that was because he was drinking so much.

In restaurants, they always bring drinks first, so Owain would down half a pint of orange juice (all that extra sugar - just what he needed!!!), before the food even came, then pick at the food and have more water to drink. I got cross with him for "filling his tummy with juice and so not eating his dinner". He was quite lively on holiday - in the swimming pool and playground etc.

After this two-week holiday, Owain started to go downhill fast - he didn't want to walk anywhere and was always whingeing about being tired and wanting to be carried. I was mean and impatient with him in retrospect, and made him walk anyway. Over the next five days he started getting up in the night to go to the loo several times, and when I banned bedtime drinks of water (how awful is that) he was extremely upset.

I finally took him to the GP on the Friday morning (so 3rd week of apparent symptoms), where a locum did a urine test, saying "this is just to put your mind at rest, I'm absolutely certain there's nothing wrong with him, he looks so well...". Cheered by that, I went out shopping with Owain, coming home later to find a message from the hospital on the answering machine, saying "where are you, you're expected". I knew at that point that it was diabetes. Soooooo lucky that the GP did that test, otherwise I would have continued to leave it and he would have suffered even more.

It wasn't a happy time (in fact, melodramatic as it sounds now, both Hu and I felt at the time that it would have been better if the whole family had been wiped out in a car crash on our holiday, rather than have to face such a thing). I fainted when Owain had his blood taken (pathetic needle phobia), and had to lie down for a while to recover (useless), and Owain would scream "Mummy hide me" whenever the nurse came in to do a finger prick or injection. Of course, rather than hide him and protect him, I had to help them hurt him by holding him down as he struggled and cried. We had to wait till the Monday to see a Consultant and finally get a pen with needles of an appropriate length.

Owain had lost a lot of weight (I had failed to notice), but once started on insulin he quickly regained it and looked healthier than before. He also was willing (due to being so starving) to try all sorts of foods that he previously rejected, and now is one of the most unfussy eaters of my acquaintance (adults included!).

Life has been turned upside down and will never be the same, and there is always going to be a tinge of sadness there, but we are determined that Owain will have a happy healthy life with all the opportunities and life chances that he would have had without diabetes.