

The Adjustment Bureau



I've never let my diabetes get in the way of my passion for cycling. On the days I exercise or take part in any sporting event, I try to analyse my blood sugars to understand my blood sugar profile. And even though I understand pretty well now after years of practice how my body responds to different foods and physical activity, each day still offers a new learning experience.

On 6 March 2011, I took part in an event called the OCBC Cycle Singapore with my friend, who also has type 1 diabetes, and who shares the same passion as I.

I rose very early that morning at five and did my blood glucose check. It was 4.5mmol/L. I gave myself 4 units of Novorapid (Insulin), half of what I normally require to prevent hypoglycaemia during exercise, then ate a chocolate muffin, a large banana and half a packet of mango juice. By 5.30am, I was out of the house heading for the F1 Pit building where the event was held.

I arrived at 6.35am after cycling 12km, and did another blood glucose check which gave a reading of 7.5mmol/L. When my blood sugar level is less than 10.0mmol/L, I will normally eat a snack before exercising, so I ate a packet of Oreo cookies. After which, my friend and I took our places at the starting point.

The event kicked off at 7.15am. We took our time as there were many cyclists on the road. I was chiefly concerned about controlling my blood sugars and ensuring that I did not fall over due to the heavy bike traffic.

During the ride, I drank water to prevent dehydration and cramps. However, after cycling about 25 to 28 km, the cramps in my leg forced me to down PowerGel, a sports supplement, to make it to the finishing line. I clocked a time of 1 hour 25 minutes, one of my personal bests. After the ride, I guess I decided to congratulate myself with a can of isotonic drink before meeting my friend for breakfast.

At the breakfast table, I tested my blood glucose. It had gone up to 12.6mmol/L. I knew instantly that the culprit responsible for this blood sugar spike was that isotonic drink but the greater culprit was me! I realised that I should have tested my blood sugar after reaching the end point instead of indulging in that drink!

So before I tucked into my bowl of mee siam and cup of ice coffee, I had to do some damage control. I gave myself 8 units of Novorapid. After breakfast, I made my way home riding another 13km, which brought my blood glucose down to 5.3mmol/L. So, I ate another banana for recovery.

Every person living with diabetes has a different blood sugar profile and you need some time to get to know it better and adjust accordingly. It's kind of like your own personal adjustment bureau. If you have any issues with understanding the blood sugar profile, I am sure your doctor and nurse educator can help you!

