

### 3.17 Care of People with Metabolic Problems - Addison's disease

Amy, 27, has just been discharge from hospital with a new diagnosis of Addison's disease.

Elicit: What did you pick up about Addison's from the hospital team?

Amy: I was too stressed to really understand it. They told me that it was important to never stop my tablets and to always see a doctor if I'm feeling poorly.

Provide: Well that's a good start. In Addison's disease your adrenal glands are under-active and you don't have the normal level of hormones to keep your blood pressure, immune system, salts and sugar levels right, especially when you are ill or stressed.

Elicit: OK so far?

Amy: Yes.

Provide: This explains why you have been feeling tired, dizzy when you stand up, sick and why you've been off your food.

We need to replace the steroid hormones that you are lacking. It is important that you take the medicine every day, otherwise you can become unwell very quickly. If you become unwell, for example with an infection, you may need extra steroid tablets, so that your body can cope with the stress.

Elicit: Got that?

Amy: Sure.

It's a good idea to wear a bracelet on your wrist which tells people that you have Addison's in case you ever feel too unwell to explain. You will continue to see the specialist but don't be afraid to come and see us if you are concerned at any time or unsure about your tablets. Have you already got a leaflet about Addison's and the contact details for the Addison's society?

Amy: They gave me the web address.