



"TeleHealth has helped me with my weight too ... it keeps me on my toes to watch what I eat."

Carol Hodges

THE PROBLEM

People with Diabetes have high levels of glucose in their blood because the body cannot use it properly. Insulin is a hormone produced by the pancreas and helps the glucose to enter the cells where it is used as fuel for energy so we can work, play and generally live our lives. In addition to diabetes 58-year-old Carol also suffers from a heart condition which means she has an irregular heartbeat and palpitations.

THE NEED

Carol's blood pressure often drops very low and, the concern for her and her husband is that it could happen quite rapidly with little time to recognise the symptoms.

THE ANSWER

Carol has been trialling the TeleHealth system in her home since January 2009. The system is aimed at giving her the tools she needs to help manage her own health at home with the supervision of health professionals.

THE METHOD

Using TeleHealth, Carol is able to take her own blood pressure, weight, pulse, blood sugar and oxygen levels each day. The readings are taken with special equipment which is linked to a set-top box connected to her television. The results, which Carol can view on her television, are automatically uploaded to a team of healthcare professionals who view them daily.

THE EQUIPMENT



Set-Top Box

Small, unobtrusive unit connected via the TV. The unit stores vital signs data.



Blood Pressure Monitor

Daily blood pressure readings are updated into the set-top box.



Body Weight Scales

Fluctuations in daily weight readings can indicate health problems.



Pulse Oximeter

Measures blood oxygen levels and heart rate.



Blood Glucometer

Measures blood sugar levels.

THE OUTCOME

"Every morning I look forward to seeing how my readings are. Before I would just do it but not really understand or take the time to see a pattern," said Carol.

"One morning I called the nursing team and told them that I was not feeling at all well. They looked at my readings and said that my BP looked very low. Before I knew it an ambulance was here at my house... If it wasn't for them I don't think I'd be here today... a few more minutes could have been vital," she said.

Carol is now playing a much more active role in the management of her own health and is more conscious of any changes in her readings.