

The Earthquake Story

It was late afternoon and I had just arrived home on a deliciously warm and sunny late autumn afternoon and because I was hot I thought I would get changed into something cooler before carrying the groceries upstairs.

As I was changing I heard a mighty roar and then the whole house started to rock and roll and everything rumbled. Instinctively I knew it was an earthquake and yet I didn't want to believe it was. Our house is a Lockwood and supposedly safe in earthquakes but it positively shrieked as it moved with the quake. I was really scared.

I ran and switched on the computer clicking onto the Geonet website to confirm what I thought was happening. I wanted to know where the quake was centred as we live in a tsunami zone. The web site confirmed the quake was centred less than 10 km away and was shallow at only 5 km down but at only a 3 on the Richter scale I felt ashamed to have been so frightened when I knew what Christchurch had endured. Still I could not get those Christchurch images out of my mind.....! Especially when more quakes rattled on through.

Taking stock of my situation did not help me at all – I lived in a small and relatively isolated place which was a summer holiday destination. Everyone was back at their places of main residence which meant there was not another occupied house in our street. My partner was working away from home. I have Type 1 diabetes. I was on my own.

I tried to think straight and decided to walk till I found an occupied house – in the next street only. I knocked on the door and let them know where I was, that I was in residence and somehow managed to artfully slip into the conversation that I had diabetes. The fact someone else knew I existed made me feel a little better.

Calmness began to return. I had imagined dealing with lots of scenarios while living alone including getting sick, having a fall, experiencing a bad hypo – but not having an earthquake. We do not live in a part of the country that is known for them!!

Things quietened - till bed time. By then it was raining and then the shakes started again – long, loud and active. Why does the dark make everything seem worse? I lost it completely and called my other half in tears telling him how scared I was. He reminded me I was on my own and to think about why I was frightened and to do something about it.

Soul searching made me admit I was scared because I felt vulnerable due to my diabetes. I there and then set about being prepared. I put my car outside (in case we lost electricity and I could not open the garage door); I got the big torches out, put warm clothing and sturdy shoes beside the bed. I put a first aid kit, blankets and water in the car. But most important of all is that I got my diabetes travel kit out with all my back up supplies in it. I put my insulin in the special travel pouch to keep it cool and I put all other medication, testing gear and spares of everything into the kit. As soon as I did this I felt calmer because I was more in control. I knew I could look after myself for a few days if I absolutely had to.

Next morning I thought of all the things I didn't include in my get-away- fast kit – like clean knickers, some loo rolls, a can opener, something to cook on, but you know what – I didn't really care because all that mattered is I knew I had my diabetes essentials. I am really glad I keep these together in one grab-it quick bag. The peace of mind is worth it in this shaky country of ours.

Christine
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