

Diabetes Chill Mode

THE ILET

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In my lifetime, there have been so many incredible advances when it comes to tools for keeping blood sugars in “target” as much as possible. I am so grateful for all these things – from rapid-acting insulins to CGMs (continuous glucose monitors), life with diabetes can be so much easier.

But the thing is, even when using the latest technologies, there remains a constant to-do list for diabetes. When I start to feel hungry, on top of trying to figure out what to cook for dinner every night, I consider how many carbohydrates to prepare based on where my CGM is starting out. I have to time the bolus far enough in advance for the insulin to work appropriately and keep my BG from spiking like a roller coaster and subsequently causing me to feel like garbage and like a failure for messing up the mealtime dosing. Oh, I also have to feed my children, my husband, my dog, work my actual job, take care of the house, and overall be a normal functioning human being, all while trying to manage diabetes.

Sure, this may not seem like that big of a deal. But, repeat this for every meal, every day, for your entire life, and it just wears on you. It’s endlessly frustrating that you put in so much effort to time the meal, plan the meal, take the right amount of insulin at the right time, eat at the planned time and even when you magically do all of this “properly” sometimes diabetes decides to give you the finger in your CGM graph.

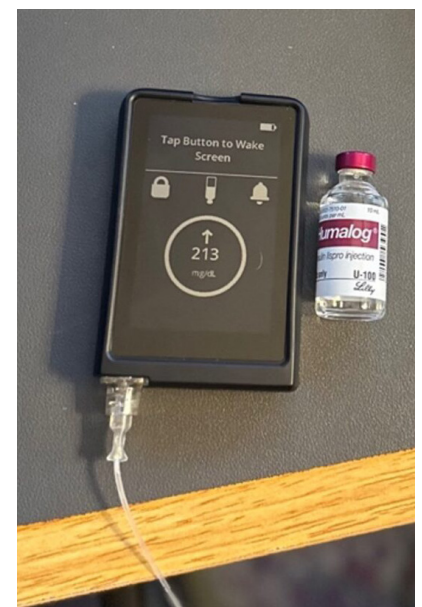
Enter the iLet

When I first met Ed Damiano, one of the creators of the iLet, his passion was palpable. He was frustrated with the available options for his son who has T1D and decided to make it his life’s mission to alleviate the burden of diabetes for his kid. Since I grew up with a dad like Jeff Hitchcock, I knew that he would figure it out and admired and appreciated the drive Ed had (and still has).

I started wearing the iLet the Monday morning before Friends for Life Orlando, because, I don’t know – go big or go home? It was a really weird week to start the system because it learns your routine, and, well, if you’ve been to FFL, you know that it’s not your typical routine. There are a lot of added steps, a lot of added carbs, and a whole lot of emotions to keep you on your toes BG-wise.

Starting Point

When they started the training, they asked me to name the iLet, and this is something that I always feel like is a high-pressure thing (even though you can rename it anytime you want). I immediately thought of “Chill Mode” which is something that Tesla has to describe a driving mode. My whole purpose of trying this device was hoping to put my diabetes in “Chill Mode” – meaning I wouldn’t be doing all kinds of things to try to stay in range. This is how the iLet was designed – not for a lot of micromanaging (more on this later).



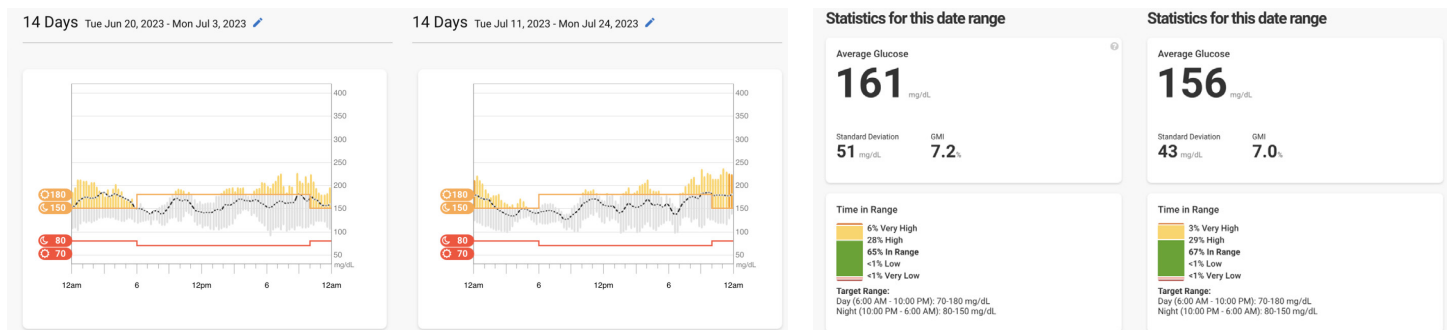
Here are some of the bells and whistles:

- Induction charging with a battery that lasts about a week
- The only setting you put into the pump is your body weight
- The algorithm learns you as you wear it and adapts over time
- The second cartridge slot is already in the device for when glucagon is an option

I'll admit, the first few days made me skeptical of how I would like the system, but I knew that was not a fair chance and I needed to wear it at home to see how it would really work for me. I also will share that I do not love the current cartridge system it uses. It honestly makes me a little nervous for people who are new to pumping to start on the system, but it's a kink they have already planned on and started working out.

The Numbers

The numbers are very similar overall.



I do have to say that I feel better with the lower standard deviation – meaning my swings are not as intense. Additionally, I spend less time in the “very high” range, which is great because when I’m very high, I am also very grumpy.

The Dream

About three weeks into wearing the system I had this dream where I found out I was going to run out of supplies (because I’m on a loaner while I get my insurance figured out) and have to go back to my Tandem Control IQ. Keep in mind, that I have LOVED my Control-IQ system for years at this point. I woke up thinking, “that was a weird dream” and moved on with being a normal human and going to work, etc.

The next day, Ed reached out and asked me how things were going. I then reflected on the dream and realized how much I really am enjoying this system. I had not carefully counted my carbohydrates in three weeks, and I did not want to have to do it again if I could help it. I know it sounds like it’s not that big of a deal if you don’t do diabetes every day. But if you do – you get it. It’s been incredible not having this added task every day for almost 4 weeks now.

It’s not that my blood sugars are better or my time in range is increased, they are all about the same as Control-IQ. It’s that my diabetes is less work, less mental time, less frustration. It’s that when I’m high after a meal where I selected “usual” I think, welp, I guess I try “more than usual” next time. It’s that there is not as much effort going into a bolus that didn’t work out. I feel less defeated. I feel lighter. Diabetes sucks just a little bit less, and for me, this is a dream come true.

Having Options

Because Beta Bionics was started by a diabetes dad, the company is trying to do things a little bit differently. They are offering a 90-day trial with the option to return it at the end if it’s not the right fit for you. They realize that diabetes is not a one-size-fits-all approach, and that there will be people who do not like this system. Maybe they like to have more autonomy or understanding of the inner workings of their Automated Insulin Delivery (AID) System. Maybe they like to micro-manage because this works for them and for their diabetes. That’s okay!

You have to do what works best for you and your diabetes, and that may change over time, and that’s okay, too! The beauty is that we have options and hopefully we continue to have options and access to using whatever diabetes tools we want. For now, I’m loving my “Chill Mode” iLet, and I hope you find something that helps diabetes feel a little lighter for you, too.

DISCLAIMER: I am not funded by Beta Bionics, the company that makes the iLet, nor am I suggesting that my experience will be your experience. You may love it, you may hate it, and I hope you have the opportunity to choose whichever diabetes management tools you want!