Involve your local hospital laboratory
Your local hospital pathology laboratory can play a supportive role in providing advice on a range of issues including the purchase of devices, training, interpretation of results, troubleshooting, quality control, and health and safety.

Management
Many people will be involved in the creation, implementation and management of a POCT service. It is vital that an appropriate POCT co-ordinator is identified and a POCT committee established.

Health and safety
Be aware of the potential hazards associated with the handling and disposal of body fluids, sharps and waste reagents outside of a laboratory setting.

Training
Training must be provided for staff who use POCT devices. Only staff whose training and competence has been established and recorded should be permitted to carry out POCT.

Always read the instructions
…and be particularly aware of situations when the device should not be used.

Standard operating procedures (SOPs)
SOPs must include the manufacturer’s instructions for use.

Assuring quality
The analysis of quality control (QC) material can provide assurance that the system is working correctly.

Results
Results should be reviewed by appropriately qualified staff with particular reference to the patient’s history.

Record keeping
…is essential and must include patient results, test strip lot number and operator identity.

Maintenance
In order that devices continue to perform accurately they must be maintained according to the manufacturer’s guidance.