

The Self Care Guide for People with Type 2 Diabetes



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Diabetes UK has worked with Servier
in producing this educational literature

NAME

ADDRESS

.....

.....

.....

AGE

DATE OF BIRTH

HEIGHT

ALLERGY

NHS NO.

HOSPITAL NO.

CONSULTANT

GP NAME

TELEPHONE NO.

ADDRESS

.....

.....

PRACTICE NURSE NAME

HOSPITAL

CONSULTANT NAME

ADDRESS

.....

.....

TELEPHONE NO.

DIABETES NURSE SPECIALIST

TELEPHONE NO.

DISTRICT NURSE NAME

TELEPHONE NO.

DIETITIAN NAME

TELEPHONE NO.

CHIROPODIST NAME

TELEPHONE NO.

PHARMACIST NAME

TELEPHONE NO.

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1. What is Diabetes Mellitus?

Diabetes Mellitus is a condition where there is too much glucose in the blood.

Normally we produce a hormone called insulin (produced in the pancreas gland) which allows the glucose which we take in our food to be taken from the blood and used by the body for energy. In diabetes mellitus, there is either a lack of insulin or the insulin that is present does not work properly. Too much glucose then stays in the bloodstream and cannot be used by the cells for energy production.

The results of this are:

- i) The body cannot get enough energy to work properly. This is why many people with diabetes are diagnosed after visiting the doctor complaining of feeling tired or ill.
- ii) Some of the increased glucose in the blood is lost from the kidneys resulting in passage of large volumes of urine, dehydration, thirst and weight loss.

2. Which type of diabetes do I have?

There are two types of diabetes.

Type 1

In this condition, the pancreas stops producing insulin altogether. The cause of this problem is still unknown and it often occurs at a young age (less than 20 years old). Since the body is not producing any insulin of its own, people with this condition need insulin injections for life.

Type 2

This condition tends to occur in people over the age of 40 (though in certain cases and populations it can occur at a younger age). The pancreas still produces insulin but not enough to meet all of the body's requirements, or the insulin it does produce does not work properly (insulin resistance).

Type 2 diabetes accounts for about 85% of all cases of diabetes. There are different ways of treating it, and the choice of therapy depends on many factors and so differs from individual to individual.

- 1) Diet and exercise
- 2) Diet, exercise and tablets
- 3) Diet, exercise and insulin injection.

*This booklet will concentrate on Type 2 Diabetes

3. What is "Hypo"?

Some tablets and insulin treatment can sometimes cause the glucose level in the blood to fall to a very low level. This is especially so if meals are delayed following drug or insulin administration or if physical activity is greater than usual.

Warning Signs that your blood glucose level is too low:-

Trembling. Dizziness. Sweating, Hunger. Sudden mood changes (Irritability). Headache. Going pale. Palpitations or rapid heart beats. Blurred vision. Sudden tiredness. Tingling around the mouth.

What to do

Take some quick acting sugar such as:- sugar lumps, glucose tablets, boiled sweets, chocolate or sugary drinks. Once the symptoms have passed eat some starchy food, such as a sandwich, or your next meal if it is due. This will help prevent you going hypo again.

How to prevent "Hypos"

Try not to miss a meal. Try to eat carbohydrate at every meal (ie. Pasta, bread). If you exercise, eat a snack. Always carry something sugary with you. Have a contact number of your ambulance/hospital services to hand in case of an emergency.

4. How do I measure my glucose levels?

Urine Tests

Your doctor will advise you at what time and how often you should test your urine for glucose. Read and follow carefully the instructions on the container of your test strips.

Keep a record of your urine tests in the Home Test Diary section of this book and take it with you each time you visit your doctor.



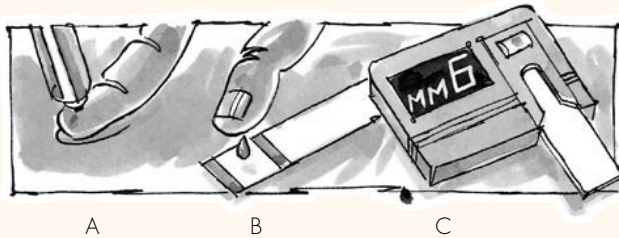
If your urine tests persistently show any glucose, tell your doctor.

Blood Tests

Your doctor may ask you to do finger prick blood glucose tests instead of urine tests. These are more accurate and some people find them more convenient. The doctor will advise you how often you should test. Again, there is a section in the Home Test Diary for you to record the results of your blood glucose test.

Interpretation of blood glucose levels

Less than 4 mmol/L	Low
4 - 10 mmol/L	Ideal
Over 10 mmol/L	High



- Wash your hands, then obtain drop of blood
- Place on test strip
- Read glucose level with meter (or colour chart)
(Details vary with different devices)

5. What can I eat?

Special diabetic foods are not necessary.
See dietary advice later in information booklet.

SPEAK TO YOUR DIETITIAN OR NURSE FOR FURTHER INFORMATION



6. Can I drink alcohol?

If you take tablets or insulin, drinking alcohol can cause low blood glucose (hypoglycaemia). Do not drink a lot of alcohol. As for everybody, drinking should be done in moderation. It is recommended that people with diabetes should drink no more than 14 units (for women) or 21 units (for men) per week. A unit of alcohol is equal to a half pint of beer, or lager, a standard glass of wine or a standard measure of spirits. Try to eat starchy foods with, or shortly after, alcoholic drinks. Test your blood glucose afterwards and the following day.

Try to limit drinks like sherry and sweet wines. If you are overweight, keep your alcohol intake as low as possible as alcoholic drinks are high in calories. Try to avoid 'low-sugar' beers and lagers as these are often higher in alcohol content.

REMEMBER

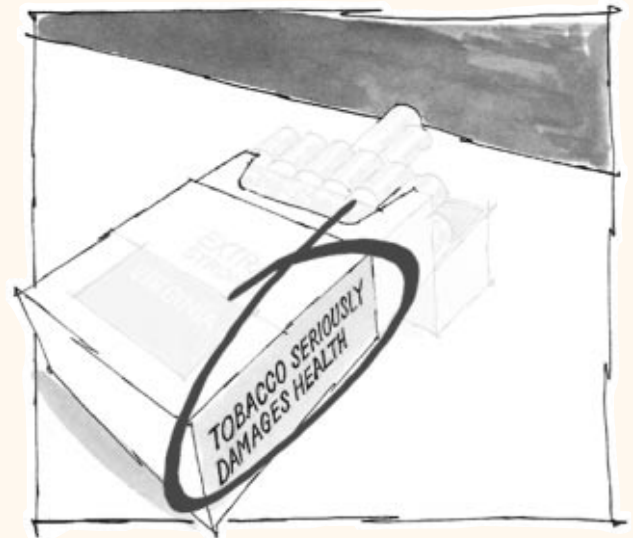
1. Alcohol contains many calories.
2. Never drink on an empty stomach.
3. If drinking shorts, remember to use slimline mixers.
4. Alcohol can mask the warning symptoms of hypos.
5. If you are unconscious and smell of alcohol people may not think to check for hypoglycaemia.
6. Do not drink and drive.

7. Can I smoke?

It is better for you not to smoke.

Smoking is very harmful for everybody, but especially for the person with diabetes.

Smoking increases the risk of developing heart attacks, stroke and gangrene of the feet. Seek advice from your doctor or nurse to help give it up.



8. Why do I have to take care of my feet?

Your feet are very important!

You have Type 2 diabetes, but did you know that it is very important to take good care of your feet?

People with diabetes quite often have problems with their feet, particularly with skin infections that can be slow to heal. In most cases, these problems can be avoided by careful foot hygiene and good footwear.

Tips for healthy feet

A. Check your feet regularly. (Use a mirror if necessary).



Check for

- ◆ Areas of swollen or puffy skin
- ◆ Small cracks or cuts
- ◆ Areas of skin that have changed colour
- ◆ Areas that are painful to touch
- ◆ Areas that are unusually hot or cold
- ◆ Areas where sensation of pain or touch is reduced

B. Wash feet every day.

Do not use pumice or foot brush to remove hard callouses, but you can use a foot file gently prior to washing and consult a state registered podiatrist/chiroprapist.

C. Apply moisturiser to dry areas – Avoid putting between the toes

D. Trim your nails carefully – Cut them following the shape of the toe

E. Check bath temperature



Avoid placing your feet in or near temperatures that are very hot (eg sitting too close to the fire) or very cold or do not put your feet in very hot water. Check the temperature of the water with your elbow or with a bath thermometer before you use it.

F. Wear well fitting shoes

Many foot problems start from minor cuts or injuries, which are often caused by **badly fitting shoes**.

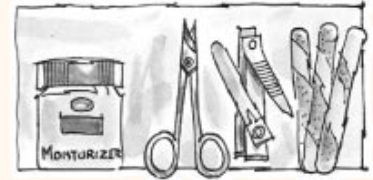


How to choose the right shoes

Make sure your shoes fit properly. It is better to have your feet measured before you buy shoes. Don't wear new shoes for long periods of time, until they feel comfortable.

Do not wear very high heels as these can put too much pressure on your toes and the ball of the foot. Shoes should have an adjustable fastening to ensure a good fit and be broad fitting with a deep and rounded toe area. Trainers are the best type of shoes for people with diabetes.

Regularly feel inside your shoes for sharp or rough areas, tiny stones or other things which could damage your feet. Also check your socks for rough, thick seams.



G. Visit your doctor, diabetes nurse, podiatrist or chiropodist as they recommend



Regular care of your feet is essential!

Ask your GP or local health centre for information on chiropody which is available **free of charge**. If you notice any of the foot problems listed earlier, speak to one of these health professionals without delay.

9. What about driving?

If you are applying for a driving licence, you must mention that you have diabetes, when you fill in the form.

If you hold an existing driving licence, when your diabetes is first diagnosed you should inform the DVLA that you have diabetes.

You should also tell your insurance company that you have diabetes.

For more information consult the Diabetes and Driving factsheet available from Diabetes UK.



10. What about travel and holidays?

Contact your doctor well before your holiday to arrange the necessary vaccinations. Arrange medical insurance, making sure it will cover your diabetes, and carry a form of diabetes identification. Take enough medication to last you through your holiday, and some spare. Divide your medicine between your hand and main luggage, in case your luggage gets lost. Keep your monitoring equipment with you. If you are on insulin and flying, keep it in your hand luggage as it can be damaged if carried in the hold of the plane.



11. What do I need to know about health checks?

Have a diabetes health check at least once a year. This should include your weight, blood pressure, HbA_{1c} (long term glucose control) cholesterol levels, kidney function, an examination of the back of your eyes, your feet, circulation and nerves as well as giving you the chance to discuss your diabetes.

Talk to your doctor in October about flu vaccinations.

All people with diabetes are entitled to **free flu vaccinations**.

12. Dental care

Tell your dentist you have diabetes. Have regular checkups and if you have any problems, see your dentist as soon as possible.

13. Free prescriptions

If your diabetes is treated with tablets or insulin, **you are entitled to free prescriptions, but you need an exemption certificate. Ask your doctor, nurse or pharmacist how to apply.**

14. What about family planning?

Tell your doctor or family planning clinic about your diabetes as this may affect the choice of contraception you are offered.

It's a good idea to discuss, with your diabetes specialist, your plans for starting a family. It is very important to control your diabetes before you conceive as well as during pregnancy. There is no reason why you cannot have a safe and successful pregnancy provided you follow the advice of your doctor.

Some men with diabetes experience impotence. Please talk to your doctor as treatments are available.

15. Can I play sport or exercise?

Regular exercise is an ideal way to keep fit and healthy. There is no reason why a person with diabetes cannot take exercise or play sport, providing their physical condition allows it. Regular exercise reduces the risk of heart attack, stroke and high blood pressure. Exercise helps to control your blood glucose levels and may reduce the need for medication. It also makes weight control easier. Try to do 20 minutes of moderate exercise (for example, fast walking, cycling or swimming) at least three times a week. Start slowly and build up. Talk to your doctor before you start an exercise programme.

Remember, exercise can lower your blood glucose level. You may need to eat extra food before and after you exercise.



16. What happens to the eye in diabetes?

People with diabetes are at risk of developing eye damage. Diabetes is the most common cause of blindness in people under the age of 65, and in many cases is preventable.

What are the symptoms of eye disease in diabetes?

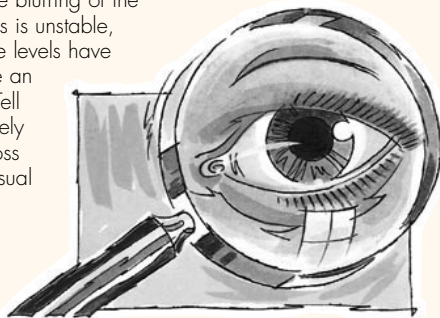
The retina at the back of the eye can be damaged (retinopathy). Abnormalities in the blood flow at the back of the eye may lead to poor vision. (Retinopathy is a risk when you have diabetes, particularly if your glucose control has not been good).

Cataracts and glaucoma are also more common in people who have diabetes.

There are often no symptoms until serious damage has happened. **So it is important to have your eyes checked every year.** If problems are found early, treatment is much more successful.

Cataracts cause a misting effect on the vision.

If your blood glucose levels are higher than normal, this can cause blurring of the vision. If your diabetes is unstable, wait until your glucose levels have settled before you see an optician for glasses. Tell your doctor immediately if you have sudden loss of vision or serious visual disturbance.



Who does the diabetic eye examination?

Ophthalmic opticians who have had extra training can carry out the tests.

Hospital diabetes units and some GP surgeries offer a diabetic eye examination as part of the yearly check-up. **Eye checks are free for people with diabetes.**

How will the eye examination be carried out?

You will have to read from an eye chart, **so if you wear glasses, take them with you.**

The optician will put drops into your eyes to dilate your pupils and allow him or her to see the back of your eye. The drops may sting and can affect your vision or make your eyes sensitive to light for a while. Take sunglasses with you and do not drive until the effect has worn off. If possible, arrange for someone to take you home.

Treating people with eye disease

Most people with diabetic retinopathy have mild changes and simply need regular checks to make sure it is not getting worse. However, there are more serious forms of retinopathy which may need laser treatment to prevent your vision from getting any worse.

Cataracts can be removed by a fairly simple operation.

17. Why did my doctor measure my blood pressure?

Your doctor measured your blood pressure because high blood pressure (BP) is about twice as common in people who have diabetes. People with diabetes who have high blood pressure have two to five times the risk of suffering from a stroke or heart attack.

Kidney damage in diabetes (nephropathy) can happen more quickly if you also have high blood pressure. If high blood pressure is treated effectively, it can slow down this damage.

The risk of eye damage in diabetes (retinopathy) is higher if you also have high blood pressure.

You will greatly reduce your risk of complications by controlling your blood pressure levels.

How is high blood pressure diagnosed?

Your BP should be measured when you are relaxed and rested. It should be measured on several occasions to check if your BP is persistently high. Some people can feel anxious when the doctor or nurse takes their BP. This can lead to artificially high readings. To solve this problem, you may be given a 24-hour BP monitor which measures your BP automatically while you go about your usual activities at home. You should have your BP measured at least once a year at your diabetes checkup.

How can I help to keep my BP normal?

- ◆ Watch your weight.
- ◆ Reduce your salt intake to a minimum.
- ◆ Take regular, moderate exercise, for example, 20 minutes exercise at least three times a week. Activities such as brisk walking, swimming, or riding a bike are good.

- ◆ Keep your alcohol intake to less than 3 units a day if you are a man, or 2 units a day if you are a woman. (Unit = 1 standard measure of spirit, half a pint of beer or lager, or a small glass of wine).
- ◆ Put aside some time each day for relaxation.
- ◆ Give up smoking. Smoking increases your chance of a heart attack or stroke further.

Drug treatment

Your doctor will recommend treatment with drugs if your BP is still high after you have tried the above measures. He or she will discuss with you the benefits and possible side effects, and will also explain your target BP reading.



18. Where can I get more information?

Diabetes UK (formally the British Diabetic Association) provides information and support for people with diabetes and their families.

It is a good idea to join Diabetes UK as soon as possible, since it provides information regularly on all aspects of diabetes, and has many branches distributed throughout the country.

Diabetes UK have moved offices recently, the new address is:

Diabetes UK Central Office
10 Parkway, London NW1 7AA.
Tel: 020 7424 1000
Fax: 020 7424 1001
Email: info@diabetes.org.uk
www.diabetes.org.uk

Members receive:

- ◆ A bi-monthly members magazine, **Balance**, packed with news and information.
- ◆ A wide range of publications designed to give you the information you need to lead a full and healthy life.
- ◆ The ability to talk in confidence to Diabetes UK Careline about any issue or aspect of diabetes (call Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm **telephone** 020 7636 6112, **text** 020 7462 2757, or **email** careline@diabetes.org.uk).
- ◆ Diabetes UK national and regional offices working to improve diabetes services in your area.
- ◆ The opportunity to share experiences with other people with diabetes through the network of **voluntary groups** (over 400 nationwide).
- ◆ Diabetes UK Services' insurance and financial products designed to meet the needs of people with diabetes.

National and Regional Offices

Diabetes UK has six offices open in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Diabetes UK Scotland
Savoy House, 140 Sauchiehall Street, Glasgow G2 3DH
Tel: 0141 332 2700
Fax: 0141 332 4880
Email: scotland@diabetes.org.uk

Diabetes UK Northern Ireland
John Gibson House, 257 Lisburn Road, Belfast BT9 7EN
Tel: 028 9066 6646
Fax: 028 9066 6333
Email: n.ireland@diabetes.org.uk

Diabetes UK Cymru
Quebec House, Castlebridge, Cowbridge Road East, Cardiff CF11 9AB
Tel: 029 2066 8276
Fax: 029 2066 8329
Email: wales@diabetes.org.uk

Diabetes UK North West
65 Bewsey Street, Warrington WA2 7JQ
Tel: 01925 653281
Fax: 01925 653288
Email: n.west@diabetes.org.uk

Diabetes UK Northern and Yorkshire
Birch House, 80 Eastmount Road, Darlington DL1 1LE
Tel: 01325 488606
Fax: 01325 488816
Email: north&yorks@diabetes.org.uk

Diabetes UK West Midlands
1 Eldon Court, Eldon Street, Walsall WS1 2JP
Tel: 01922 614500
Fax: 01922 646789
Email: w.midlands@diabetes.org.uk

19. Healthy eating for people with diabetes

The types of food recommended for people with diabetes are based on the rules of healthy eating and can be enjoyed by anyone. So there is no need to have separate meals for your family. You will find that you may need to change the way you cook or prepare certain foods, or perhaps choose some healthier alternatives to foods you eat at the moment.

Your diet is the most important part of your treatment, and you should try to follow these rules for healthy eating:

- ◆ Eat regular meals – in the morning, midday and evening and try to avoid skipping meals.
- ◆ Eat more high fibre foods such as wholemeal bread, fruit and vegetables - at least 5 portions of fruit and vegetables each day.
- ◆ Don't add sugar to foods or drinks and avoid food and drinks containing a lot of sugar.
- ◆ Eat less fried and fatty foods.
- ◆ Try to reach a weight that is healthy for you.

Extra Tips

1. A meal does not have to be cooked – a sandwich is a meal.
2. If you are hungry at mealtimes have an extra slice of wholemeal bread, more potatoes or other vegetables.
3. If you are hungry in between meals, eat raw vegetables or fruit or a slice of wholemeal bread.
4. If you have to fry, use a healthier polyunsaturated cooking oil such as sunflower oil instead of lard or butter.
5. Do not buy special diabetic foods – they can be high in fat and the sweeteners they contain can have a laxative effect on the body.
6. Remember, alcohol equals extra calories.



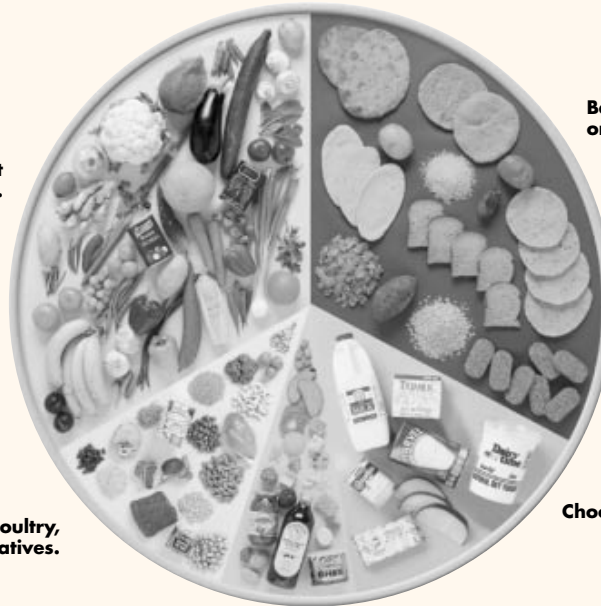
20. Eating well for Diabetes – The basis of healthy eating

Foods can be divided into five main groups. In order for us to enjoy a balanced diet we need to eat foods from these groups.

Eat at least 5 servings of fruit and vegetables every day.

Choose lean meat and poultry, fish, beans and alternatives.

Cut down on fatty and sugary foods.



Base meals and snacks on starchy foods.

Choose lower fat dairy foods.

Diabetes UK recommends that people with diabetes receive individual advice about their diet from a state registered dietitian. Ask your doctor or nurse for details.

21. How to choose the right foods

Choose at least 5 servings of fruit and vegetables every day. These are rich in soluble fibre

- ◆ Whole fruits
- ◆ Berries
- ◆ Grapes and slices of tropical fruit
- ◆ Canned fruits
- ◆ Fruit juice or dried fruits
- ◆ Fresh, frozen and canned vegetables
- ◆ Salad vegetables

Base meals on starchy carbohydrate foods.

- ◆ Oats
- ◆ Whole grain cereals and breads
- ◆ Rye bread
- ◆ High fibre white bread
- ◆ Pasta
- ◆ Rice
- ◆ All types of beans
- ◆ Potatoes

Choose lower fat dairy foods

- ◆ Semi or skimmed milk
- ◆ Light, diet or shape yoghurt
- ◆ Reduced fat or cottage cheese
- ◆ Diet fromage frais
- ◆ Virtually fat free milk puddings

Choose foods rich in mono unsaturates and cut down on fatty and sugary foods

- ◆ Rapeseed or olive oil
- ◆ Olive-oil based spreads (e.g. Olivio)
- ◆ Peanuts, Hazelnuts, Almonds
- ◆ Oil rich fish, such as mackerel, salmon or sardines, at least once a week

Choose lean meat, poultry, fish – beans provide soluble fibre too

Note: If you have an Asian diet, please ask your nurse or dietitian for information on healthy eating.

Treatment Record Annual Review

If you check the glucose levels in your urine/blood you make it easier to understand and control your own diabetes, and the information is useful for your doctor when making decisions about changes in treatments. There are many methods of measuring your glucose levels. Use the one recommended by your doctor. Ask the doctor or the nurse to show you how to do it. (See Questions and Answers section, pages 9-10). Use the Home Testing Diary to record the results of your tests and the times. Take the Diary with you when you go to see the doctor.

Medication

- ◆ Make sure you take your medication as prescribed everyday, whether it is for your diabetes or your blood pressure or to lower your cholesterol.
- ◆ If you forget your medication, don't double up the dose next time - and if this happens regularly discuss with your doctor, nurse or pharmacist.
- ◆ If you think you may be having side effects, discuss with your pharmacist.
- ◆ If buying over the counter medicines, tell the pharmacist that you have diabetes.

Sick Day Rules

- ◆ Do not stop taking your medication.
- ◆ Check your blood glucose levels at least 4 times a day.
- ◆ If your levels are very high or you are unsure what to do, contact your GP for advice.

Lipid Levels

- ◆ These should be measured at your annual review.
- ◆ You may need to take medication to lower them.
- ◆ A healthy diet and exercise can help reduce levels.

