

WHAT IS DIABETES?

Diabetes is a common condition in which the amount of glucose (sugar) in the blood is too high because the body is unable to use it properly.

Normally, a hormone called **insulin** carefully controls the amount of glucose in our blood. It helps the glucose to enter the cells where it is used as fuel by the body.

WHERE IS INSULIN MADE?

Insulin is made by a gland called the **pancreas**, which lies just behind the stomach.

WHAT IS HAPPENING IN YOUR BODY IF YOU HAVE DIABETES?

The pancreas is **unable to produce** any or enough **insulin**. Therefore when the sugar (glucose) level in the blood rises there will not be any or enough insulin to allow the sugar to be transported to the muscles to provide energy. The level of sugar (glucose) in the blood therefore gets higher than it should and some may be passed out of the body in the urine.

WHAT ARE THE MAIN SYMPTOMS OF DIABETES?

The main symptoms of diabetes are:

- Increased thirst
- Going to the loo all the time – especially at night.
- Extreme tiredness
- Weight loss
- Genital itching or regular episodes of thrush
- Blurred vision

TYPES OF DIABETES

Type 1 diabetes develops when there is a **severe lack of insulin** in the body because most or all of the cells in the pancreas that produce it have been destroyed. It usually appears in people under the age of 40, often in childhood. It is treated by insulin injections and diet.

Type 2 diabetes develops when the body **can still produce some insulin**, though not enough for its needs, or when the insulin that the body produces does not work properly. It usually appears in people over the age of 40. It is treated by diet alone, or by combination of diet and tablets, or by combination of diet and insulin injections.

HEALTHY EATING

The diet for people with diabetes is not a special diet. It is a normal, healthy diet recommended for everybody – low in fat, sugar and salt, with plenty of **starchy foods, fruit and vegetables**.

What you eat directly affects your blood glucose levels. It can also influence the amount of fat (such as cholesterol) in your blood. So it is **important to eat the right kind of foods** to stay healthy.



Here are some helpful healthy eating tips to help you to control your diabetes:

- **Avoid being overweight**
- **Eat regular meals.**
- Try to **cut down on fried and fatty foods** such as butter, margarine, cheese and fatty meat. Try skimmed or semi-skimmed milk.
- Avoid sugary foods such as chocolate, cakes, sweets or sweetened drinks.
- Eat more fruit, vegetables and pulses such as beans, peas and lentils.
- Drink alcohol in moderation only.
- Save money and don't buy special diabetic foods.

KEEPING FIT

Good glucose control is all about balancing treatment and diet with **exercise**.



Regular exercise will also help you watch your weight and make you feel more active and energetic.

Swimming increases your strength, stamina and suppleness, but make sure you have a snack and ask your clinic about this could affect your treatment.

Walking suits those who prefer a more gentle way of exercising.

HOW IS DIABETES TREATED?

Although diabetes cannot be cured, it can be treated very successfully.

Type 1 diabetes is treated by injections of insulin and a healthy diet.

Type 2 diabetes is treated by a healthy diet, exercise or by a combination of a healthy diet, exercise and tablets. Sometimes people with type 2 diabetes also have insulin injections, although they are not totally “dependent” on the insulin.

TAKING CARE OF YOURSELF

- Looking after your feet and eyes will keep you one step ahead of any problems that might arise – ask for advice from your clinic or pharmacy and see your chiropodist and optician regularly

IT'S A GREAT IDEA TO MINIMISE ANY DIABETES-ASSOCIATED PROBLEMS IN THE FUTURE BY LOOKING AFTER YOURSELF NOW.



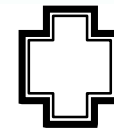
WHY MONITOR YOUR OWN BLOOD GLUCOSE LEVELS?

You may feel that as long as you eat healthily and take your medication then that's all that matters. Naturally, many people assume that if you feel okay then you are okay. But, it is important to stay aware and not be lulled into a false sense of security. We know that people with diabetes have an increased risk of developing a number of conditions:

- Heart disease
- Kidney disease – nephropathy
- Eye disease – retinopathy
- Nerve damage – neuropathy
- Stroke
- Poor circulation, particularly in your legs

DIABETES

WHAT SHOULD YOU KNOW ABOUT DIABETES?



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