

# Ongoing care for diabetes

## Diabetes and Endocrinology Patient Information Leaflet

### What is diabetes?

Diabetes is a condition in which the amount of glucose in the blood is too high because the body cannot use it properly. Glucose comes from the digestion of starchy foods such as bread or potatoes, from sugar and other sweet foods. The liver also makes glucose and passes it into the bloodstream.

Insulin, a hormone produced by the pancreas, helps the glucose to enter the cells where it is used as fuel by the body for energy. Without insulin your body cannot use the glucose so it stays in your blood.

There are two main types of diabetes:

**Type 1 diabetes** develops when there is a severe lack of insulin in the body. This is because most or all of the cells which make insulin have been destroyed. This type of diabetes usually appears before the age of 40. It is treated by insulin injections and diet.

**Type 2 diabetes** develops when the body can still make some insulin, though not enough for its needs, or when the insulin that the body does make is not used properly (insulin resistance). This type of diabetes usually appears in people over 40. It is treated by diet alone or by diet and tablets, or sometimes by diet, tablets and insulin injections.

## What are the symptoms of diabetes?

The main symptoms of untreated diabetes are increased thirst, passing large amounts of urine, extreme tiredness, weight loss, genital itching and blurred vision.

## Diabetes care – what should I expect?

In order to keep well and healthy, every person with diabetes needs good health care. Control of your diabetes and the early detection and treatment of any possible problems is very important.

Targets for improvements in diabetes care have been outlined in the St Vincent Declaration which came out of a meeting of European health officials and diabetes associations in St Vincent, Italy in 1989. In the UK, the Department of Health and Diabetes UK have set up a joint task force to put the St Vincent Declaration into practice. These targets are to:

- Reduce disabilities caused by diabetic complications
- Improve the outcome of diabetic pregnancies
- Provide effective education in self care for people with diabetes
- Improve economic and social conditions for people with diabetes

To achieve the best possible diabetes care, the health professionals and the person with diabetes need to cooperate as equal members of a team. It is essential that you understand your diabetes as well as possible so that you are an effective member of this team.

## What happens when I have been diagnosed with diabetes?

You will have:

- A full medical examination
- A talk with a registered nurse who has a special interest in diabetes. She will explain what diabetes is and will talk to you about your individual treatment
- A talk with a state-registered dietitian who will give you basic advice on what you should be eating. A follow up meeting should be arranged for more detailed advice

- A discussion on any implications of diabetes on your job, driving, insurance, prescription charges etc., and whether you need to inform the DVLA and your insurance company, if you are a driver
- Information about Diabetes UK's services and details of your local group
- Ongoing education about your diabetes and the beneficial effects of exercise and assessment of your blood glucose levels

You should be able to bring a close friend or relative with you to educational sessions, if you wish.

### **If you are being treated by insulin:**

You should also have frequent sessions for basic instruction in injection technique, looking after injection equipment, blood glucose and ketone testing, and what the results mean. You will be given supplies of relevant equipment.

### **If you are being treated by diet alone:**

You should also have instruction on blood or urine testing and what the results mean. You will be given supplies of relevant equipment.

## **What ongoing care will I have?**

Once your diabetes is reasonably controlled, you should have access to the diabetes team at regular intervals, depending on your diabetes control. These meetings should give time for discussion as well as for assessing diabetes control. At these meetings:

- Your weight should be recorded
- Your urine should be tested for protein
- Your blood should be tested to measure long-term control
- Your blood pressure should be checked
- Your vision should be checked and the back of your eyes examined. A photo may be taken of the back of your eyes. If necessary you will be referred to an ophthalmologist (a doctor who examines, diagnoses and treats diseases and injuries in and around the eye)
- Your legs and feet should be examined to check your circulation and nerve supply. If necessary, you should be referred to a state-registered podiatrist (person qualified to diagnose and treat problems with the feet and lower legs)

- If you are on insulin, your injection sites should be examined
- You may need to have a blood test to check your cholesterol level
- You should have the opportunity to discuss how you are coping at home and at work

In addition you should be able to:

- Contact a member of the healthcare team for specialist advice when you need it
- Have more education sessions when you are ready for them
- Have a formal medical review once a year by a doctor experienced in diabetes

## What do I need to do?

It is essential that you understand your own diabetes to enable you to be in control of your condition. You should ensure you receive the care described in this leaflet from your local diabetes clinic, GP practice or hospital. We suggest that you:

- Contact your GP to discuss the diabetes care available in your area
- Contact your local community health council
- Contact Diabetes UK or your local Diabetes UK branch

## Can I find out more?

### Diabetes UK

Tel: 0345 123 2399

Website: [www.diabetes.org.uk](http://www.diabetes.org.uk)

If you have any questions, or if there is anything you do not understand about this leaflet, please contact:

Diabetes Team on 01384 244399 (9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday)

**This leaflet can be made available in large print, audio version and in other languages, please call 0800 0730510**

ਨਿਕਰ ਇਹ ਲੀਫਲੈੱਟ (ਛੋਟਾ ਇਸਤਿਹਾਰ) ਤੁਸੀਂ ਆਪਣੀ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ (ਪੰਜਾਬੀ) ਵਿੱਚ ਲੈਣਾ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ ਹੋ ਤਾਂ ਛਿਪਾ ਕਰ ਕੇ ਪੇਸ਼ਟ ਇੰਨਫਰਮੇਸ਼ਨ ਕੋ-ਆਰਡੀਨੇਟਰ ਨਾਲ **0800 0730510** ਟੈਲੀਫੋਨ ਨੰਬਰ ਤੇ ਸੰਪਰਕ ਕਰੋ।

यदि आपको यह दस्तावेज़ अपनी भाषा में चाहिए तो पेशन्ट इनफ़रमेशन् को-आरडीनेटर को टैलीफ़ोन नम्बर **0800 0730510** पर फ़ोन करें।

ਜੇ ਤਮਨੇ ਆ ਪਤਿਤਾ ਨਮਾਚੀ ਪੋਤਮਾਨੀ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ (ਪੰਜਾਬੀ) ਵਿੱਚ ਲੈਣਾ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ ਹੋ ਤਾਂ ਛਿਪਾ ਕਰ ਕੇ ਪੇਸ਼ਟ ਇੰਨਫਰਮੇਸ਼ਨ ਕੋ-ਆਰਡੀਨੇਟਰ ਨਾਲ **0800 0730510** 'ਤੇ ਸੰਪਰਕ ਕਰੋ।

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إذا كنت ترغب هذه الورقة مترجمة بلغتك الأصلية ( اللغة العربية ) ، فارجاء اتصل بمختص المعلومات للمريض **0800 0730510** على التلقون **Information Co-ordinator**

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