



# Diabetes

Diabetes fact sheet for Adults Social Care and Health

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EAST RIDING  
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# Diabetes

...for Adults Social Care and Health

<b>Overview:</b>	This fact sheet explains what diabetes is, outlines the different types, and describes how each can affect people's health and daily lives. It also highlights common symptoms to look out for and the treatment options and support available.
<b>Content:</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Introduction to Diabetes</li><li>2. Types of Diabetes</li><li>3. Symptoms</li><li>4. Treatment and Support</li><li>5. Caring for someone with Diabetes</li></ol>

<b>1</b>	<b>Introduction</b>
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Diabetes is a condition that causes blood glucose (sugar) levels to become too high. It is caused by your body not making enough or any of a hormone called insulin, or the insulin not working properly (insulin resistance). Insulin is needed to help the body use glucose for energy.

There are no known causes of type 1 diabetes. Family history can slightly increase the risk, as there are several genes linked to type 1 diabetes. Age, family history, ethnicity, waist circumference and living with obesity or overweight are all risk factors for type 2 diabetes.

There are two different types of diabetes which will be explained below.

<b>2</b>	<b>Types of Diabetes</b>
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## **Type 1 Diabetes**

Type 1 diabetes occurs when the body is no longer able to produce insulin. The immune system attacks and destroys the insulin-producing cells in the pancreas, which is why type 1 is classed as an autoimmune condition.

Fewer than one in ten people in the UK living with diabetes have type 1 diabetes. There is currently no known cause and nothing that can be done to prevent it.

Although it is often diagnosed in childhood, type 1 diabetes can develop at any age. A person's risk is slightly higher if their mother, father, brother, or sister also has type 1 diabetes.

There is no cure at present, but ongoing research is focused on new treatments and potential future cures.

## Type 2 Diabetes

Type 2 diabetes affects around 90% of people living with diabetes. It develops when the body does not make enough insulin or cannot use insulin effectively.

Consistently high blood sugar levels can lead to complications over time, including heart disease, stroke, and problems with the eyes, kidneys, and feet.

Type 2 diabetes can develop gradually and may go undiagnosed for years if symptoms are mild or overlooked.

It is linked to several risk factors, including:

- Age
- Family history
- Ethnicity
- Genetics
- Waist circumference
- Living with overweight or obesity
- Physical inactivity

There is no cure, but some people can put their type 2 diabetes into remission through significant and sustained improvements in blood glucose levels.

### 3 Symptoms

There are four main symptoms currently known as the 4 Ts

Going to the toilet more frequently, especially at night.

Feeling more tired than usual.



Feeling thirsty.

Loosing weight without trying to.

There are also other symptoms to be aware of:

- Genital itching or thrush
- Cuts and wounds that take longer to heal
- Blurred eyesight
- Increased hunger

These symptoms can affect anyone – adult or child. Some symptoms are more commonly experienced by people with type 1 diabetes and can come on quickly. Symptoms of type 2 diabetes can be easily missed because they develop slowly over a longer period.

Having diabetes can increase the chance of developing other health problems, including:

- Heart attack and stroke
- Kidney problems
- Nerve damage and foot problems – diabetes can cause damage to nerves (peripheral neuropathy)
- Sight problems – adults and children aged 12 or over will be offered diabetic eye screening every 1 to 2 years
- Gum disease

## 4 Treatment and support

If someone is at risk of diabetes, they should contact their GP. Encouraging them to get advice early can help prevent problems later.

If diabetes symptoms come on suddenly, they should get an urgent GP appointment or call NHS 111. Anyone with possible symptoms should speak to their GP and ask for a blood test.

### Treatment of type 1 Diabetes

Insulin is the main treatment for type 1 diabetes. This is given through daily insulin injections or an insulin pump, which is a small device worn on the body that continuously delivers insulin. Learning how to count carbohydrates helps people match their insulin doses to the amount of carbohydrate they eat and drink, which supports good blood sugar management.

People with type 1 diabetes need to check their blood sugar levels regularly, often using finger-prick tests. Many use a continuous glucose monitor (CGM) or a flash glucose monitor, which reduce the need for finger-prick testing and provide more detailed information. These devices help people spot and treat low and high blood sugar levels (hypos and hypers) more quickly.

### Treatment of type 2 Diabetes

The main treatments for managing blood sugar levels in type 2 diabetes include:

- **Healthy eating and being more active**

Support is available through GP referral to Live Well programmes, dietetic services, or local physical activity schemes. There are also many online resources from the NHS and Diabetes UK to help people understand and manage their diabetes.

- **Medication, including metformin and sometimes insulin**

Most people start with medications such as metformin, which help lower blood sugar levels. A GP will prescribe and review these medicines regularly, along with routine blood tests. Some people may also need insulin.

- **Weight-loss treatments**

If someone meets the criteria, the GP may refer them for weight-loss medicines or weight-loss surgery.

- **Emotional health support**

Living with diabetes can impact emotional wellbeing and may be linked with stress, burnout, or depression. Support is available through healthcare professionals, GP services, and free helplines via phone or email.

A person with diabetes who is receiving regular care and support should have a personalised care and support plan in place. This plan should clearly outline:

- The type of diabetes they have and any associated risks.
- Their symptoms and how these should be managed.
- Details of all treatment, including medication, insulin use, and review dates.
- Any additional support they receive in relation to their diabetes.

Key Considerations for Staff Supporting Someone with Diabetes:

### **Daily Monitoring and Record Keeping**

- Complete and record daily skin and foot inspections. Any concerns should be raised promptly with the GP. The person should also receive regular foot care from a trained chiropodist, who can provide additional guidance and support.
- Monitor and document food and fluid intake where appropriate, and cross-reference this with the person's Nutrition Care Plan. Goals and targets should be set and monitored using MUST (Malnutrition Universal Screening Tool).
- Monitor oral health daily, ensure the person is registered with a dentist, and report any concerns to the dentist and/or GP.

### **Health Screening and Treatment**

- Ensure the person attends diabetic eye screening, which is essential for identifying diabetic retinopathy — a condition caused by prolonged high blood sugar that can damage the retina and lead to permanent sight loss.
- Recognise that glucose-monitoring needs vary: some individuals require daily checks, while others only need reviews every six months by trained health professionals. This will depend on whether they have type 1 or type 2 diabetes.

### **Collaboration With Professionals**

- Work in partnership with professionals such as the Dietitian, Diabetes Specialist Nurse, and GP to help the person achieve their individual health goals.

### **Person-Centred Support and Wellbeing**

- Place the person at the centre of their care planning, supporting them to set their own goals and make informed decisions. People with type 2 diabetes may choose to make lifestyle changes, such as increasing physical activity, adopting healthier eating habits, or exploring weight-loss treatments.
- Consider the person's emotional wellbeing, as diabetes can have a significant impact on mental health. Staff should seek additional support or referrals to other professionals when required.

## Useful Support Tools

- Diabetes team and GP – Ongoing medical care, monitoring and advice.
- Dietitians / Dietetic services – Support with diet and nutrition (referral through GP).
- Learning Disability Community Team – Additional support for adults with a learning disability.
- Oviva – Weight-loss and medication support programmes (GP referral required).
- Local gym trial programmes – Often a 10-week GP-referred physical activity scheme.
- NHS Diabetes information – <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/diabetes/>
- Diabetes UK Helpline – 0345 123 2399 (Monday–Friday, 9am–6pm).
- NHS Talking Therapies – Support for anxiety, depression or stress: <https://www.nhs.uk/nhs-services/mental-health-services/>
- T1D Breakthrough – Emotional wellbeing support for people with type 1 diabetes: <https://breakthrough1d.org.uk/knowledge-support/living-with-type-1-diabetes/health-and-wellbeing/emotional-wellbeing/>
- Diabetes UK – Information, guidance, and peer support.
- Mobile health apps – For tracking exercise, diet, blood glucose or activity.
- Online diabetes education courses – <https://www.diabetes.org.uk/about-diabetes/looking-after-diabetes/education>
- Diabetes Online Community (DOC) – Peer support networks via social media and forums.
- ERYC Guidance and Procedure – Diabetes Management