

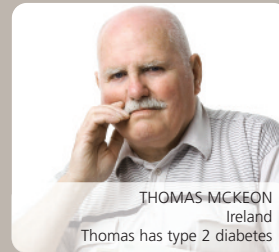
looking after yourself



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Netherlands
Tienieke has type 2 diabetes



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Who is this booklet for?

This booklet is for adults with diabetes and is designed to help you 'look after yourself' so that you can live a healthy, full and enjoyable life.

The aim is to give you key information on topics such as healthy eating, exercise, sexual health and dealing with depression and stress so that you can learn to cope with these issues and hopefully avoid longer term complications associated with diabetes.

If you need more information, or have any worries about your diabetes or health, your nurse or doctor will be happy to help.

This booklet is one of a series of information booklets and leaflets provided by Novo Nordisk to people with diabetes.

Other titles in the series are:

For adults with diabetes:

- diabetes monitoring diary
- help with 'hypos'
- type 1 diabetes
- type 2 diabetes
- gestational diabetes
- travelling with diabetes
- your feet and diabetes

For children with diabetes:

- Pete the pancreas for parents
- Pete the pancreas for children
- Pete the pancreas for carers
- Pete the pancreas children's diary

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**Remember - diabetes should not stop
you enjoying life!**

Healthy eating

Why is eating healthily so important?

- ✓ Eating healthily will help to keep your body in tip top shape and boost energy levels, as well as helping you to manage your
 - weight
 - blood glucose
 - cholesterol
 - blood pressure
- ✓ A healthy balanced diet is important for everyone
- ✓ Having diabetes doesn't mean that you have to buy special **'diabetic' foods**.

What should I be eating?

A balanced meal for all the family should include:

- ✓ Starchy carbohydrates - also known as complex carbohydrates. These are high fibre, slow release (low glycaemic index), wholegrain versions of carbohydrate foods e.g.
 - wholegrain bread
 - wholegrain or basmati rice
 - wholegrain pasta
 - potato with skin
 - porridge oats
 - unsweetened muesli
 - other high fibre wholegrain cereals.



RICHARD HARTMAN
Netherlands
Richard has type 2 diabetes

The healthiest carbohydrates are those found in nature. Fruits, vegetables and wholegrains are always a healthier choice than anything that comes in a box, jar or can.

- ✓ Lean protein e.g.
 - lean red meat
 - chicken or other poultry with the skin removed
 - fish (salmon, trout, mackerel, herring, fresh tuna and sardines are particularly good as they contain omega-3 oils for heart health)
 - beans, peas, lentils
 - low fat cheese
 - low fat milk
 - eggs
 - vegetarian protein such as tofu or Quorn
- ✓ Lot of vegetables, salad or fruit e.g.
 - carrots, onions, mushrooms, peppers, cabbage, turnip, tomato, lettuce, cucumber, aubergine, broccoli, cauliflower, spinach, leeks, brussels sprouts, asparagus
 - Apples, oranges, bananas, grapes, strawberries, raspberries, kiwis, grapefruit, mango, blueberries the list is endless!!

What about between meals?

- Fruit and yoghurts are great if you feel hungry and need to snack between your meals or to eat after meals instead of biscuits or desserts – they're low in fat, contain lots of vitamins and minerals and help you to meet the recommendation of '5 a-day' for fruit and vegetables and '3-a-day' for dairy
- Chocolate, cakes, sugary foods, biscuits and fatty fried foods like takeaways are not healthy foods to eat every day and should be kept as occasional treats
- Artificial sweeteners (which you can sprinkle on cereals, into beverages and find in diet drinks/minerals) are a good alternative to sugar if you like sweet tasting beverages as they won't affect your blood glucose levels or weight.



Why do I need to lose weight?

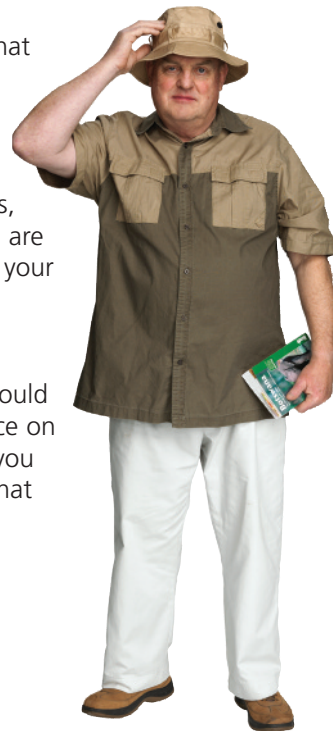
- If you are overweight, losing even a small amount of weight is really important for helping you to manage your diabetes. It improves blood glucose levels, blood pressure and cholesterol and can even improve your mood!
- Taking in less energy (as calories in food) than you burn up (through activity and exercise) is the key to losing weight. Here's a few key tips for helping you on the way:

- ✓ **Eat regularly** – aim for 3 meals each day with breakfast, lunch and an evening meal.

Eating breakfast is important as we know that people who eat breakfast are much more likely to lose weight than those who skip breakfast.

You may need to snack between your meals, depending on what medications/insulin you are using, so ask for more detailed advice from your dietitian and diabetes team.

- ✓ **Be aware of your portion sizes.** Recommended portion sizes vary, so you should talk to your dietitian for more detailed advice on how many portions from each food group you need each day. An approximate guide to what makes up one portion is:
 - 50-75g of meat, chicken or fish (size of deck of cards)
 - 1 slice of bread
 - 1 medium potato
 - 3 dessert spoons of pasta or rice
 - 1 medium sized piece of fruit.



HOWARD FANCOURT
UK
Howard has type 2 diabetes

What can I do to improve the health of my heart?

- Keeping your heart healthy is as important as keeping blood glucose levels in check, and what you eat has a big influence on your cholesterol levels and blood pressure.

- ✓ **Monounsaturated fat** (found in olive oil, rapeseed oil, avocados, almonds) taken in moderation is generally good for cholesterol levels and heart health
- ✓ **Oily fish** (e.g. salmon, trout, mackerel, herring, sardines, fresh tuna, anchovies, pilchards) are particularly good for cholesterol and blood fat levels and have other anti-inflammatory effects which benefit the heart – we should all aim to eat oily fish twice each week
- ✓ **Soluble fibre** which is found in fruit, vegetables, beans, peas, lentils and oats not only helps to reduce cholesterol levels, but also helps to regulate blood glucose levels
- ✓ **Reducing your intake of saturated animal fat** decreases cholesterol levels so choosing lean meat, low fat milk, low fat spreads and low fat cheese and avoiding cream, cakes, biscuits and pastries can all help to keep cholesterol levels down
- ✓ **Reducing your intake of salt** can help to reduce blood pressure. Try using pepper, garlic, herbs and spices, rather than salt, to flavour foods. Reducing your intake of highly processed foods such as pizzas, frozen meals, packet soups and sauces also helps as these foods contain high levels of salt.



OLGA ARALUSHKINA
Russia
Olga has type 2 diabetes

Remember to drink plenty of water (6-8 glasses) throughout the day; it helps to keep you feeling full and prevents dehydration.

What about exercise?

Physical activity is important for everybody but especially so if you have diabetes.

Why should I exercise?

- ✓ Improves your blood glucose control
- ✓ Helps your insulin work more effectively
- ✓ Increases 'good' cholesterol
- ✓ Reduces the risk of heart disease
- ✓ Reduces the risk of high blood pressure
- ✓ Reduces the risk of strokes
- ✓ Helps you lose weight
- ✓ Makes you feel better!

What sort of exercise?

- ✓ Any kind of movement that requires effort that you enjoy, e.g. walking, swimming, cycling and tennis
- ✓ If you are new to exercise, start slowly with advice from your nurse or doctor.

How often should I exercise?

- ✓ Aim for 30 - 60 minutes physical activity every day.

What else should I do?

- ✓ Wear well-fitted, cushioned shoes or trainers
- ✓ If you are on insulin or certain tablets check that your blood glucose level is normal before and after exercise
- ✓ Carry glucose in case of 'hypos'



STEPHEN CLANCY
Ireland
Stephen has type 1 diabetes

**Most importantly, have fun
- do something you enjoy!**

Smoking



Smoking and diabetes: a deadly combination



The health risks associated with diabetes multiply when you smoke.

Smoking:

-  Increases your risk of heart attack
-  Increases your risk of cancer
-  Raises your blood pressure
-  Increases your risk of stroke
-  Increases your 'bad' cholesterol (LDL) and decreases your 'good' cholesterol (HDL)
-  Increases your risk of infection, making it harder for your body to heal
-  Decreases your circulation, causing nerve damage and increasing risk of amputations
-  Increases your risk of kidney disease (nephropathy)
-  Increases your risk of eye disease and eventual blindness (progressive retinopathy)
-  Increases your risk of suffering from erectile dysfunction, i.e. difficulty achieving and maintaining an erection

The good news!

It is never too late to stop smoking. The benefits begin as soon as you stop.

-  ✓ Within 20 minutes, your blood pressure and pulse rate will return to normal. Circulation improves in your hands and feet, making them warmer
-  ✓ Within eight hours of stopping, the oxygen level in your blood will rise to normal and the carbon monoxide level will fall
-  ✓ Within 24 hours, the chance of you suffering a heart attack and stroke begins to fall
-  ✓ Within 72 hours, you can hold more air in your lungs. Breathing becomes easier. Your energy levels increase
-  ✓ Within days, your risk of developing unwanted blood clots reduces
-  ✓ Within days, your sense of smell and taste will begin to improve
-  ✓ Within one year, the risk of a heart attack falls to about half that of a smoker
-  ✓ Within 10 years, you will have about the same risk of heart disease as someone who has never smoked.



CAROL KING
UK
Carol has type 2 diabetes

Talk to your doctor or nurse for help to stop smoking or contact the National Smokers' Quitline: 1800 201 203
www.quit.ie

Alcohol

The maximum recommended intake for alcohol is the same for people with diabetes as those without diabetes.

Maximum recommended intake spread throughout the week

Men = 17 units per week
Women = 11 units per week

- 1 small glass of wine (150 ml) = 1.5 units
- 1 pub measure of spirits = 1.5 units
- 1 pint of beer /lager /cider = 2.0 units
- 1 bottle of beer = 1.5 units



Important points

- Have 2 – 3 alcohol free days per week
- Use a sugar free mixer
- Alcohol is high in calories. If you want to lose weight reduce your intake of alcohol
- Never drink alcohol on an empty stomach

If you take insulin or certain tablets it is particularly important that you:

- Always have a carbohydrate snack before bed after consuming alcohol to decrease the risk of night time hypos
- Carry Diabetes ID and hypo treatment with you.

Alcohol consumption will decrease your awareness of the signs of hypos.

Drugs



Say NO to drugs

Taking illegal drugs has a detrimental effect on your physical, mental and psychological health and wellbeing. These drugs can also have a profound effect on glucose levels and the person's ability to manage diabetes.

Name	effects on glucose
Hash, cannabis, marijuana	Can mask the symptoms of hypos. Can cause high glucose levels by increasing appetite or cravings for food.
Ecstasy	Increases metabolism and can also cause dehydration. This can result in extremely high glucose levels and sometimes severe hypos
Amphetamines, cocaine	Can cause high glucose levels as it stimulates the liver to release glucose. Also alters appetite.
Heroin	Can change eating habits which can cause high or low glucose levels

Drugs cause decreased awareness which can lead to hypos. Say NO!

Looking after your feet

People with diabetes who take good care of their feet and protect them from injury can significantly reduce the risk of developing foot ulcers. It is important to have your feet checked by a health care professional at least once a year.

Should you develop a foot problem, seek medical attention as soon as possible.

If left untreated, even the smallest foot ulcer can develop into serious problems.

The following guidelines will help you to look after your feet:

1. Wash your feet daily. Test the water temperature with your elbow to avoid scalding accidents.



2. Dry your feet thoroughly - especially between the toes. Cut and file toenails straight across if your diabetes team have advised you to do so.



3. Apply moisturiser or petroleum based gel to your feet to keep your skin supple and to prevent cracking. However, avoid moisturising between the toes.

4. It is **ESSENTIAL** to examine your feet daily for cuts, hard skin, callus spots or small ulcers. The soles of your feet are best examined using a mirror.



5. Breaks in the skin should be covered with a dry, sterile dressing. Do NOT burst blisters or treat verrucas yourself, but seek help from your diabetes team.



6. Remember diabetes can affect the rate of healing and breaks in the skin may take a little longer to heal.

Older people are most at risk.

7. NEVER use sharp instruments on your feet. Do not use corn plasters etc. as they contain acids. If any problems occur seek advice from your diabetes team.

8. AVOID direct heat and hot water bottles – loss of sensitivity to pain and temperature make these dangerous.



9. Ensure shoes fit well – have your feet measured in a reputable shoe store. Remember shoes must fit your feet – not vice versa.

NEVER GO BAREFOOT.



10. Remember to check inside your shoes and socks for sharp objects.

Your feet should be checked by a health care professional AT LEAST once a year.

Diabetes and sexual health

Diabetes can have an impact on all aspects of your life including your sexual health. This can affect both men and women.

Many people find it embarrassing to talk about such personal issues, but your diabetes care team are trained to help you and it is important to discuss any problems with them. There are many effective medications and treatments available.

Men

- Erectile dysfunction (ED) or impotence is when a man has difficulty achieving or maintaining an erection
- Diabetes is one of several conditions that can cause ED
- Some medications may also cause it
- Other causes are poor lifestyle choices that contribute to heart disease and circulation problems, such as smoking, excessive alcohol, being overweight or being inactive
- Psychological factors such as stress, anxiety, depression, low self-esteem, relationship problems and fear can contribute to ED.

Women

- The menstrual cycle can affect blood glucose levels and often a woman may notice higher or lower blood glucose levels than normal at certain times in her cycle. Recognising the fluctuations in blood glucose levels and appropriate adjustment of insulin is essential if this occurs
- If diabetes is not well controlled, women may experience vaginal infections, loss of libido or discomfort during sexual intercourse
- It is important to keep your blood glucose levels well regulated, and seek medical care as soon as you experience any symptoms.

Remember if you have any concerns about your sexual health:

- **Don't ignore the problem** – the earlier it is detected the easier it is to treat and there are many different treatment options
- It is important to fully explain the symptoms you have been experiencing in order to avail of the appropriate treatment options.

All women of child bearing age who are sexually active should use a reliable form of contraception if not planning a pregnancy.

Planning a pregnancy?

Planning your pregnancy is the best start you can give your baby.

Having diabetes has implications during pregnancy and you need to plan ahead to ensure you have proper care and a good outcome for you and your baby.

If you are considering pregnancy you should discuss this with your diabetes team as soon as possible.

You may be referred to a pre-pregnancy clinic.



CELESTE SMITH
South Africa
Celeste has gestational diabetes

If you have an unplanned pregnancy you should inform your diabetes team immediately.

General guidelines:

- ✓ Inform your diabetes team and have a full diabetes review
- ✓ Aim for blood sugar levels less than 5.0 mmol/L before meals and less than 7.0 mmol/l one hour after eating
- ✓ Aim to get your HbA_{1c} levels as low as possible - less than 53 mmol/mol (7.0%) and ideally less than 43 mmol/mol (6.1%) before you become pregnant
- ✓ For at least three months before you become pregnant take folic acid 5mgs daily. You will need a prescription for this
- ✓ Eat healthily and avoid being overweight
- ✓ Avoid alcohol and smoking.

Important considerations:

- Complications of diabetes relating to your eyes or your kidneys should be reviewed while planning your pregnancy
- If you are taking any medications it is important to ensure they are safe for pregnancy

If you are of childbearing age and sexually active you should use a reliable form of contraception and should not plan a pregnancy until your glucose control is considered safe by your diabetes team.

Diabetes, stress and depression

Stress

Living with diabetes can be challenging and can impact on all aspects of your life. For some people the diagnosis of and the day-to-day living with diabetes may prove stressful.

There are many strategies for coping with stress:

- Talk to somebody
- Practise relaxation exercises
- Eat healthily
- Try to get a little more exercise
- Set small achievable goals and reward yourself when you achieve them.

You could also consider:

- Joining Diabetes Ireland (www.diabetes.ie) – they have many support groups and will help you meet people in a similar situation to yourself
- Talking to a counsellor or trained therapist.

Depression

Depression can present in various ways from mild to severe.

People with any long-term conditions such as diabetes are more prone to depression.

This may be attributed to:

- Changes in diet
- Frustration with managing blood glucose levels
- Fear of developing complications.



LARS MYHRER
Norway
Lars has type 1 diabetes

As with any health issue, it is important that you talk to your GP as soon as you recognise that you may be experiencing any of the following:

- Mood changes – feeling sad, irritable or prone to panic attacks
- Thought changes – difficulty concentrating, being negative if you are usually positive
- Physical changes – tiredness or changes to your sleep patterns
- Behavioural changes – lack of motivation to engage with your normal activities.

It may be possible to talk to a relative or a friend about how you feel or you may need to be referred for counselling and/or treatment.

When you attend for your diabetes appointments do inform your diabetes team of how you are feeling.

Set yourself small achievable daily goals.

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changing diabetes®

Living with diabetes isn't easy. It takes discipline, control and support from the people around you. At Novo Nordisk, we want to be your partner in living well with diabetes. We understand that diabetes is just part of who you are, not what defines you. And that you need to be able to count on the company that supplies your medicine.

So what can you expect from us? Besides the medication you need to stay healthy and in control of your life and our leadership in the search for a cure, you can expect us to continue taking real steps in making sure everyone with diabetes, no matter where they are, has access to the care they need. To be ethical and responsible in the way we do business. And just as importantly, you can count on us to help change the way the world sees your diabetes - so that it just sees you.

Further information is available from:
Diabetes Ireland
Lo Call: 1850 909 909
www.diabetes.ie
info@diabetes.ie

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