Advice for people newly diagnosed with Type 2 diabetes
Welcome

You have recently been diagnosed with Type 2 diabetes. This leaflet is designed to give you some initial advice until you are able to attend a structured education programme. It will help you start to manage your diabetes, whilst continuing to live a full and active life.

The aim of this leaflet is to help you to:
✓ Make changes to your lifestyle to help control your diabetes
✓ Balance the demands of diabetes care in your daily life
✓ Involve your family / those close to you in your care

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Answer true or false to the following:

1. People with diabetes can be fit and well  
   ✔

2. People with diabetes cannot eat sugar and need a special diet  
   ✖

3. If you are overweight, losing weight can help control diabetes  
   ✔

4. People with diabetes will have to take more time off work due to illness  
   ✖

5. Exercise can improve your diabetes control  
   ✔

6. Unless you need insulin, your diabetes is not serious  
   ✖

7. If you feel well there is no need to see the doctor  
   ✔

8. You will need to test your blood glucose (sugar) every day  
   ✔

9. You cannot pass diabetes onto your children  
   ✔

10. There is support available for people with diabetes  
    ✔
Answers

1. **True.** People whose diabetes is well controlled can be fit and well.

2. **False.** People with diabetes should eat a healthy, balanced diet like everyone else. There are no foods that need to be completely avoided and there is no need for special diabetic foods. *Everybody newly diagnosed with diabetes should be referred to a registered dietitian and a diabetes education programme.*

3. **True.** If you are overweight, losing weight can help lower your blood glucose, reduce the risk of heart disease and make it easier to be more active. *Even a small amount of weight loss will have a beneficial effect. Take one step at a time.*

4. **False.** Having Type 2 diabetes will not be a barrier to you working and achieving your potential, and the better your diabetes control, the less likely you are to need time off for diabetes–related illness.

5. **True.** Exercise and being active can lower blood glucose and blood pressure and help you to achieve or maintain a healthy weight which will help you to control your diabetes, see page 16.
6. **False.** Diabetes is a serious condition whether or not you need insulin. Insulin is just one type of medication which can lower your blood glucose.

7. **False.** Having regular checks is the best way to see how well controlled your diabetes is.

8. **False.** Testing your blood glucose is only one way to measure diabetes control. Discuss whether you need to test your blood glucose with your GP or practice nurse. Read more (on page 22) about the other tests you can expect to help you manage your diabetes.

9. **True.** Although your children will have a greater risk of developing Type 2 diabetes, this risk can be reduced by the whole family eating a healthy diet, maintaining a healthy weight and exercising regularly. This advice applies to the risk of developing Type 2 diabetes and not Type 1 which is the type most commonly seen in childhood.

10. **True.** As well as support from your GP and practice nurse, there are organisations such as Diabetes UK, which provide lots of advice and useful information to help you manage your diabetes. **See page 28 for more details.**
It is a condition where the body cannot use glucose properly for energy because either the body does not produce enough insulin or the insulin does not work properly. Glucose is released into the blood when food and drinks containing carbohydrate are digested.

Insulin is essential to move the glucose out of the blood and into the cells in our body to be used for energy. In diabetes, the glucose stays in the blood which can make you feel tired. The body tries to get rid of the glucose by making you pass more urine than usual and you can become very thirsty. **9/10 people with diabetes have this type of diabetes.**
How is it managed?

There are a number of things you can do to control your diabetes;

- Eat a healthy balanced diet – page 10
- Be as physically active as you are able – page 16
- Aim to be a healthy weight – page 17
- Set yourself some goals – page 18
- Look after yourself – page 22
- Get some support – page 26
We know that diabetes is a serious condition. But, we also know that when people with diabetes are supported to keep their diabetes under control, from day one of diagnosis, it has a huge benefit to long term health and wellbeing and will reduce the risk of any future complications that can occur when diabetes control is left unchecked.

**Eyes**
Keeping blood glucose and blood pressure under control helps to avoid damage to the small blood vessels at the back of the eyes. In future you will be offered eye screening appointments at regular intervals to look for any changes at the earliest possible stage.

**Heart**
Keep as active as you can, eat a healthy diet and aim towards a more healthy weight if this is a concern for you… even small improvements will make a big difference for a healthy heart, circulation and glucose control!

**Kidneys**
Keeping blood glucose and blood pressure controlled will help to keep the blood supply and filtering system in the kidneys healthy. Blood and urine checks at regular intervals will help to detect any early changes and help your GP or practice nurse to identify if treatment is needed.

**Feet**
Checking your feet daily is very important. Your practice nurse will be able to provide specific advice about this. If you do have any numbness or circulation problems to your feet, checking them daily, wearing sensible footwear and not walking barefoot will help to keep your feet in good working order.
Mood
Feeling down? Overwhelmed?
Sometimes coping with a diagnosis of diabetes can be daunting and many people do experience periods of uncertainty or low mood. Knowing more about how to manage diabetes can help. We recommend that you take every opportunity to learn about diabetes to help you feel more confident now and for the future. If you do find coping difficult, please speak to your GP or practice nurse. They can help you to access the right support for you and link you to the Diabetes Education Programmes in your area.

Nerves
As well as preventing any loss of sensation to the feet, keeping your blood glucose levels under control will avoid damaging the nerves, which can cause problems with your digestion and sexual function. If you do experience any of these problems, please speak to your GP who will be able to advise on treatment.

Teeth
Keep your blood glucose levels under control to reduce the risk of tooth decay and gum disease.

Here is some general advice to help you get off to a positive start. Take the opportunity to discuss these points in more detail with your GP or Practice Nurse and make sure you access a Diabetes Education course in your area to learn much more about how to keep healthy with diabetes.
Healthy eating for diabetes—Top tips to get you started

Have breakfast, lunch and an evening meal each day
To keep blood glucose levels steady. When blood glucose levels fall, you feel hungry and may overeat. Spacing your meals evenly through the day can help you manage your hunger and stop you overeating. This can help you to lose weight as you are less likely to snack.

Eat a healthy balanced diet
It is myth that people with diabetes need to eat a special diet. It is a healthy diet which will be good for everyone in the family to follow. There are no foods that need to be completely excluded.

What is a balanced diet?
The picture opposite shows you the proportions of the different types of foods you should include in your diet. The five food groups are;
Meat, fish, eggs and beans
An important source of protein and minerals. Try to have 2 portions a day and choose lean meat and low fat cooking methods. Fish, especially oily fish, and pulses eg beans, chickpeas are particularly good choices and protect against heart disease.

Fruit and vegetables
Most people do not eat enough of these. Include vegetables or salad with your main meals every day. Fruit makes a really good dessert or snack.

Starchy carbohydrates
These are an important source of energy, can provide fibre and essential vitamins but as they break down to glucose they will cause your blood glucose levels to rise. Include some with each main meal. Finding out more about carbohydrate portions will help to find the right portion size for you.

Milk and dairy foods
These are an important source of calcium for bone health. Choose the lower fat varieties.

Foods high in fat and added sugar
Foods from this group should make up the smallest proportion of your diet. A small amount as part of a healthy diet is fine.
Healthy eating for diabetes

This plate model shows the different proportions of the food groups to aim for in your daily diet.

**Top Tip:** As a rough guide, the portion of starchy carbohydrate should be about the size of your clenched fist, the protein food about the size of the palm of your hand and the vegetables or salad should be 2 large handfuls.

Check the contacts at the back of the booklet for information on resources to help you with portion sizes.
Patient story - John

John was diagnosed with diabetes when he was 62. He retired from work as a plumber 3 years ago and found that he was doing much less activity and eating more because he was spending more time at home. As a result his weight increased from 13 stone to 14 ½ stone. He had a discussion with his practice nurse and identified the need to plan to have healthier, lower calorie snacks during the day. To help him, his wife agreed to stop buying biscuits and chocolate “for the grandchildren” and they have both now lost weight.

Top tips
• Plan meals ahead and make a shopping list
• Avoid shopping when hungry
• Try shopping online to avoid temptation
• Only buy the amount you need. Special offers in supermarkets can often tempt you to buy more or larger portions of the less healthy foods
• Avoid snacks of more than 100 calories.
• Reduce your salt intake
Meal ideas

Breakfast

• Wholegrain cereal with semi-skimmed milk
• Granary or wholemeal toast
• Boiled, scrambled or poached egg with bread or toast
• Mushrooms, tomatoes or beans with bread or toast
• Fruit and yoghurt

Light Meal

• Baked beans, sardines or pilchards on toast
• Sandwich or roll with lean meat, tinned fish, egg or a little cheese. Add some salad/vegetables
• Crispbreads or crackers with cottage cheese, low fat cheese spread or reduced fat pâté
• Jacket potato and salad with tuna and sweetcorn, baked beans, vegetarian or beef chilli or a small amount of grated cheese or cottage cheese
• Vegetable or lentil soup with a roll or bread
• Pitta bread with salad and hummus
Evening/Main Meal

- Roast, grilled or casserole meat with vegetables and potatoes
- Spaghetti bolognese or pasta with a tomato sauce. Enjoy with salad or vegetables
- Vegetable or meat curry with rice or chapatti
- Vegetable or meat chilli with rice
- Fisherman’s pie with vegetables
- Poached or grilled fish with potatoes and vegetables or salad
- Chicken or fish risotto with vegetables
- Stir fry – use a little oil and plenty of vegetables

Desserts

- Fresh fruit or fruit tinned in juice
- Diet or low fat yoghurt/fromage frais
- Sugar free jelly
- Fruit stewed without sugar. You may stir in an artificial sweetener before serving
- Custard made with skimmed or semi-skimmed milk
- Small portion of ice cream
Get Up and Go!

Be physically active
Being physically active is an important part of the lifestyle changes needed for good diabetes control and can;
• Lower blood glucose
• Lower cholesterol
• Lower blood pressure
• Help weight loss
• Help lose fat around the waist
• Reduce your risk of heart disease and stroke
• Strengthen your muscles and keep joints flexible
• Improve your general and mental well being

How much physical activity?
As well as being more active in your day to day life, if you are able, you should also try and do some exercise. Start with some gentle exercise such as walking, and gradually work up to at least 30 minutes per day of moderate intensity exercise, 5 times a week. You should feel slightly out of breath. If you have any complications of diabetes you should see your doctor before undertaking any new activity. **Ask your practice nurse about local Exercise on Referral schemes.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Walking</th>
<th>Gardening</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Swimming</td>
<td>Cycling</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bowls</td>
<td>Dance classes e.g. ballroom</td>
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<tr>
<td>Golf</td>
<td>Vigorous housework or DIY</td>
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Aim to be a healthy weight

<table>
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<th>Your weight</th>
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<td>Your height</td>
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Am I a healthy weight for my height?
If you are overweight, losing weight will help to control your diabetes and improve your overall health.

Did you know that losing 5 - 10 % of your weight (that’s 5–10kg if you are 100kg or about ¾ stone – 1 ½ stones if you are 15 stone) can reduce your risk of heart disease and stroke by lowering blood fats (cholesterol), blood pressure and blood glucose levels?

Have a chat with your practice nurse if weight management concerns you.
Quiz

It can be easier to know what to do than actually doing it! This quiz will help you to understand where the gaps are so that you can plan to make changes.

For each of the statements, circle the answer that best applies to you.

1. A. I should have breakfast every morning
   1 2 3 4 5
   B. I do have breakfast every morning
   1 2 3 4 5

2. A. I should eat at least 5 portions of fruit and vegetables a day
   1 2 3 4 5
   B. I do eat at least 5 portions of fruit and vegetables each day
   1 2 3 4 5

3. A. I should only eat fatty foods such as meat fat, chicken skin and pastry in moderation
   1 2 3 4 5
   B. I only eat fatty foods such as meat fat, chicken skin and pastry in moderation
   1 2 3 4 5
4. A. I should grill, bake, boil and poach food rather than fry
B. I usually grill, bake, boil or poach food rather than fry

5. A. I should do at least 30 minutes of physical activity a day
B. I do at least 30 minutes of physical activity a day

The next step
- Choose 1 or more statements from Group 1 where there is a big difference between your A and B scores
- Make a note in your diary to close that gap over the next month
- Do the quiz again in a month. Hopefully that gap will now be closed

Once you have succeeded in making 1 small change, you’ll have the confidence to make further changes;
Group 2

1. A. I should be a healthy weight for my height
   1 2 3 4 5

   B. I am a healthy weight for my height
   1 2 3 4 5

2. A. I should learn about food labelling and carbohydrates such as starch and sugar
   1 2 3 4 5

   B. I have learnt about food labelling and carbohydrates
   1 2 3 4 5

3. A. I should not smoke
   1 2 3 4 5

   B. I do not smoke
   1 2 3 4 5

- Choose 1 statement from Group 2 where there is a big difference between your A and B scores
- Make a note in your diary to close that gap in the next 3 months
- Write down the steps you need to take to close that gap. See page 26 for support

Achieving your goals

When you have picked your goal, ask yourself;
- What do I have to do to reach this goal?
- What is stopping me?
- Who/what will help me?
- How confident I am in reaching the goal I have set myself?
My personal action plan

My Goal
__________________________________________________
__________________________________________________
__________________________________________________

What steps do I need to take to reach this goal?
__________________________________________________
__________________________________________________
__________________________________________________

What is stopping me?
__________________________________________________
__________________________________________________
__________________________________________________

What/Who will help me?
__________________________________________________
__________________________________________________
__________________________________________________

How confident am I that I will achieve this goal?

Not confident at all 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very Confident 8 9 10

“If your confidence score is less than 6, reaching your goal may be more challenging. Making a simple change to your plan will increase the chance of your success”.

..................................................
Look after yourself

Targets for your health profile

- Your HbA1c (a longer term measure of blood glucose) should usually be between 48 – 58. Useful to track your progress.

- If your BMI (Body Mass Index) is more than 24.9 (or 22.9 if you are South Asian), your doctor or practice nurse may suggest that losing weight might help to control your diabetes. They can work this out with you.

- Your waist measurement should be no more than:
  - 80cm for women
  - 90 cm for South Asian men
  - 94 cm for all other men

- Your blood pressure should be under 130/80

- Your cholesterol should be less than 4

You will find out more about what your test results mean when you attend a Diabetes Structured Education Programme.

Ask your GP or Practice nurse for a copy of your results so that you can measure the success of any changes you make to improve your health and well being when your tests are repeated. Use the table opposite to record your results.
# All about me

## Your HbA1c

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>HbA1c</th>
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## Your Weight/BMI/waist

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## Your Blood pressure

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## Your Cholesterol

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Medication

Making changes to your lifestyle is going to improve your health and well being. Many people newly diagnosed with diabetes do not need any diabetes medication to begin with. However, in the future, you may need tablets or insulin to help you control your blood glucose or medication to control your blood pressure/cholesterol.

You can get more information on different types of medication from Diabetes UK (See Contacts at the back of the booklet) or your GP.

15 Health care essentials

There are a number of checks you should have when you attend the surgery for your diabetes care. A leaflet about these is available in the back of this booklet or from Diabetes UK and when you attend your diabetes education session.

Have you been referred for your diabetes education session yet?

Have you got a date?

If not, speak to your practice nurse.
Patient story  - Jane

My Goal – To have a healthy balanced breakfast in the morning

Jane didn’t like to eat breakfast because she was too busy in the mornings. She would have a couple of biscuits and then grab something in work, often more biscuits. This is how she started her action plan.

Jane’s personal action plan

What do I have to do to reach this goal?
Get up a bit earlier and be more organised.

What is stopping me?
I find it hard to get up in the mornings.

What/Who will help me?
Getting breakfast ready the night before. My partner will help by bringing me a cup of tea in bed.

3 months later, Jane was having cereal for breakfast most mornings before work or taking her breakfast to work with her. She no longer needs to snack on biscuits in work and as a bonus, her colleagues are doing the same!
Support

• For your routine care you should visit your GP surgery or practice nurse.

• You should attend a Structured Diabetes Education Programme which is always delivered by a trained Diabetes Educator including a Dietitian.

• If you are unable to attend a programme, you should be offered an appointment with a dietician.

• Exercise on Referral schemes. Any health care professional can refer you to one of these.

• Patient support groups– contact Diabetes UK or your surgery for details of your nearest group.

• Diabetes UK provide a service called “Careline”. Trained counsellors can provide support and information on any aspect of your diabetes; contact details can be found on the back cover.

• Diabetes UK also run an online /telephone peer support service where you can talk to individuals like yourself who are newly diagnosed with diabetes.

• You may be referred to a specialist such as a podiatrist or diabetes specialist nurse.

• In some cases you may need a referral to a diabetes consultant.

You are responsible for your diabetes but there is plenty of support for you.
Patient story - David

David, a 52 year old salesman, went to his GP 18 months ago and found out he had raised blood glucose levels, but they weren’t high enough for him to be diagnosed with diabetes. He was 15 stone and told he needed to lose weight and take more exercise. He knew that his work, driving between customers each day and stopping off in garages for chocolate and pasties was not ideal but as he didn’t have diabetes yet he didn’t think it too much of a problem. He went for a follow up appointment 12 months later and was told he had developed diabetes.

His Practice nurse referred him to a Structured Diabetes Education Programme run by a trained diabetes educator where he learned about different types of food and how they affected his blood glucose. She also referred him to the local Exercise on Referral course.

6 months on, he has a more sensible diet. He takes a packed lunch in the car so that he does not have to rely on the garages for his food and he has enjoyed the exercise sessions so much that he has bought himself a bike and plans to go cycling with his son at the weekends. He has lost a stone and a half in weight and feels so much better.
Useful contacts

**Diabetes UK Cymru**
Tel 029 2066 8276  
www.diabetes.org.uk

**Diabetes UK Careline**
Tel 0845 120 2960  
Email: careline@diabetes.org.uk

[www.bdaweightwise.com](http://www.bdaweightwise.com)
Developed by the British Dietetic Association,  
this site can give you lots of tips on losing weight

[www.carbsandcals.com](http://www.carbsandcals.com)
Resources available to help assess portion sizes  
including the calorie and carbohydrate value of  
different foods and drinks

**Smoking cessation**
Stop Smoking Wales  
Freephone 0800 0852219  
[www.stopsmokingwales.com](http://www.stopsmokingwales.com)

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