

Diabetes

Over 5 million people in the UK are living with diabetes. 850,000 people could be living with diabetes and don't know they have it. ([Diabetes UK research](#)).

Speak to [your doctor or GP](#) if you are worried about diabetes. There is local help and support available too.

What is Diabetes?

Diabetes is a long term health condition where your blood sugar (glucose) level is too high. This can be because your body doesn't produce enough of the hormone, insulin. Or the insulin it produces doesn't work well. Or, when your body can't produce any insulin at all.

This means your [blood sugar levels](#) keep rising. This means more insulin is released. Your blood always has some sugar in it because your body needs sugar for energy to keep you going. However, too much sugar in the blood isn't good for your health. Sugar is in lots of foods. Your body also turns of starch-based foods such as bread, rice, potatoes, chapatis and yams into sugar.

High sugar levels in your blood can damage parts of your body, including your eyes, heart and feet. These are called the [complications of diabetes](#). With the medical treatment and regular health checks, you can reduce the risk of these complications. Eating healthily and staying active can help you to live well.

There are 2 main types of diabetes. There are lots of different types of diabetes such as [gestational diabetes](#) which can develop during pregnancy. There are [other types of diabetes](#) related to health conditions such as cystic fibrosis.

Type 1 diabetes

[Type 1 diabetes](#): where your blood sugar is too high because your body can't make a hormone called insulin. The exact cause of Type 1 diabetes is not known. It's often

diagnosed in childhood. But it can be diagnosed at any time. You can't avoid getting type 1 diabetes. Medicine can help you to manage your blood sugar level and live well.

Type 2 diabetes

Type 2 diabetes: is when your blood sugar levels are too high. This is because the hormone, insulin, that your body makes no longer works properly. This is known as insulin resistance. Changing your diet can help you to manage your blood sugar levels. Medicine may also be needed.

Type 2 diabetes can go undiagnosed for years. Some groups of people are more at risk of Type 2 diabetes. This includes people:

- over the age of 25 with a family history of type 2 diabetes
- [from Black African, African Caribbean and South Asian \(Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi\) backgrounds](#)
- who are overweight
- who are not physically active

Diabetes UK has a [risk tool](#) that can help you understand your risk of developing Type 2 diabetes.

There's no cure for type 2 diabetes. But some people are able to make changes to their lives to put their [type 2 diabetes into remission](#). This can pause your symptoms and prevent new damage to your body.

Main symptoms of Diabetes

The main symptoms of diabetes are:

- being very thirsty
- needing to wee (urinate) more especially during the night
- feeling very hungry or very tired
-

losing weight (without trying to)

- having blurred vision
- having sores that heal slowly
- having dry, itchy skin
- losing the feeling in your feet, or having tingling in the feet
- having regular episodes of thrush

[Speak to your doctor or GP](#) if you are worried about diabetes. They can arrange a blood test to decide if you have diabetes.

Looking after yourself with diabetes

It is important to look after yourself when you have diabetes. Without treatment diabetes can cause serious problems to your eyes, kidneys, nerves, gums, feet and teeth. Read more about [the complications of diabetes](#).

Regular health checks and blood testing are important to help you to manage your diabetes. Speak to your Doctor or GP to arrange this.

You can take action to reduce or delay these side effects of diabetes. Read more on InformationNOW about ways to stay healthy:

- [healthy feet](#)
- [giving up smoking](#)
- [healthy eating and drinking](#)
- [healthy teeth](#)
- [fitness](#)

You may be eligible for free NHS prescriptions. Read more about [Help with health costs and prescriptions](#).

Eating well with diabetes

[Eating a balanced diet](#) can help you. Swapping white processed foods for wholegrains and proteins can help to lower your blood sugar levels. includes fruit and

vegetables, protein and fibre and less sugar, saturated fat and salt. Avoid sugary drinks and fruit juice as they cause your blood sugar to spike.

[Diabetes UK has a recipe finder and meal planner](#), to help you find new meals and snacks to try.

[Ramadan and diabetes](#). Information for people living with diabetes who are thinking about [fasting](#) for Ramadan.

Help and support

[Diabetes UK](#) has a free telephone helpline. Call them for information about diabetes. They will take the time to talk things through and explore emotional, social, psychological or practical difficulties. You don't need a question about diabetes to call or email them.

[Healthworks](#) support people of all ages to lead a healthier life. They offer type 2 diabetes support. Contact them to arrange a 1 to 1 appointment. They can help you to be more active. They run food skills sessions to learn healthy and affordable recipes. They can help you give up smoking and improve your mobility. They have 2 accessible gyms and offer fitness classes.

[Diabetes UK Local Support North](#) has a free local Support Group which meets regularly. You can meet other people with diabetes to talk, get information and support. There are groups in Gateshead, South Tyneside and Bedlington. It's free to take part. They also have a Facebook Chat Group.

[Newcastle Diabetes Centre](#) is based at Newcastle General Hospital. The centre provides specialist services for patients with diabetes, by arrangement by your GP. Speak to your GP if you think a referral to the centre would be help you.

[North of Tyne and Gateshead Diabetic Eye Screening](#) Speak to your GP if you think a referral to the centre would be help you.

Information in other Languages

[Diabetes UK](#) provides a wide range of information on diabetes in 20 languages. This includes their Learning Zone with practical advice on diabetes from the experts, and tips from people who have been there too.

[Making sense of diabetes technology guides](#) are available from DigiBete in other languages such as Arabic, Bengali, Chinese and Polish.

Other useful information

[Health Talk Online](#)

[The Patient Information Centre](#) offers a range of health related information including:

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- medical conditions
- procedures and treatments
- details about self help and support groups
- information about
- complaints procedures
- copies of leaflets

[NHS 111](#) has an [online symptoms checker tool](#). Ring NHS [111](#) if you need fast support and advice. For a medical emergency ring 999.

[NHS.UK](#) is a website providing health and medicines information and you can search for local services.

You may be eligible for free NHS prescriptions. Check on the [NHS BSA eligibility checker](#).

Please note - The content on this website is provided for general information only, and should not be treated as a substitute for the medical advice of your own doctor or any other health care professional. If you are feeling unwell, make an appointment to see your GP or contact [NHS 111](#). In an emergency, dial **999**.

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Useful Organisations

Patient Information Centre ? Cumbria, Northumberland, Tyne and Wear NHS Foundation Trust (CNTW)

Website: www.cntw.nhs.uk

Telephone: 0191 246 7288

Address: St Nicholas Hospital, NE3 3XT

Newcastle Diabetes Centre

Website: <http://www.newcastle-hospitals.org.uk/services/>

Telephone: 0191 233 6161

Address: Newcastle Diabetes Centre, NE4 6BE

Healthworks

Email: enquiries@hwn.org.uk

Website: <https://www.healthworksne.org.uk/>

Telephone: 0191 272 4244

Address: West End Health Resource Centre, NE4 8BE

Newcastle upon Tyne Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

Website: <https://www.newcastle-hospitals.nhs.uk>

Telephone: 0191 233 6161

Address: Freeman Hospital, NE7 7DN

NHS

Website: www.nhs.uk

Telephone: 0191 233 6161

Diabetes UK Local Support (North)

Email: hannah.morrow@diabetes.org.uk

Website: [https://www.diabetes.org.uk/how we help/local support groups](https://www.diabetes.org.uk/how_we_help/local_support_groups)

Telephone: 0780 138 8237

Address: Diabetes UK (North), WA2 7LT

Diabetes UK

Email: helpline@diabetes.org.uk

Website: www.diabetes.org.uk

Telephone: 0345 123 2399

Address: Wells Lawrence House, E1 1FH

NHS 111

Website: www.nhs.uk/111

Telephone: 0345 123 2399

Glaucoma UK

Email: h.morrow@iga.org.uk

Website: <https://glaucoma.uk/>

Telephone: 01233 648 164

Address: High Point Business Village, TN24 8DH

Related Articles

[10 Tips for good health](#)

[Heart disease](#)

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