

## Treatment cont...

- Try to eat more high fibre foods, particularly beans, vegetables, dahl and fruit. Eat at least three pieces of fruit and two helpings of vegetables or salad every day. Wholegrain starchy foods such as wholemeal chapattis, brown flour, brown rice and wholegrain cereals (e.g. porridge, Weetabix, Shredded Wheat) contain fibre, which helps to prevent constipation.
- Swap high sugar foods for low sugar foods. Use low calorie or diet fizzy drinks and squashes. Cut down on your confectionery and sweets, such as jalebi and burfi, and deserts.
- Be careful not to use too much salt in cooking and avoid salty snacks like chevda.
- Eat less fried and fatty foods such as butter, ghee, margarine, puris, samosas, chevda, fatty meats and cheese. Choose low fat spreads and reduced fat dairy products (e.g. skimmed milk, low fat yogurt), lean meat and fish. It is better to use monounsaturated oils (e.g. rapeseed, olive, mustard seed) or polyunsaturated oils (e.g. corn, sunflower) instead of ghee or butter. These oils (especially the monounsaturated ones) can help protect against heart disease. Whatever kind of oil you choose, it is important that you cut down the total amount you use in cooking.
- Try to get to the weight that is right for your height—your doctor will tell you what this is. Remember that being overweight makes your diabetes harder to control.
- Traditional foods used to treat diabetes such as karela, can lower blood glucose levels. But make sure your doctor knows that you are using these so it can be included in your treatment. Do not stop your diabetes treatment unless your doctor tells you to and always discuss any problems with your doctor.

- Patients are advised not to buy special 'diabetic foods' like sweets, jams and chocolates. They may contain the same amount of fat and may not be lower in calories compared with an ordinary product. They can be expensive and may cause stomach upsets.

The British Diabetic Association recommends that people with diabetes should be able to see a state registered dietician for advice on food and cooking. Your doctor can arrange this for you.

### Treating your diabetes with tablets

Diabetes tablets work by helping to lower your blood glucose to a more healthy level. Diabetes tablets do not contain insulin. If you are treated with tablets, you must always take them. Remember that the tablets are not taken instead of your diet - you will still need to carry on with the healthy diet as well.

### Insulin treatment

Diabetes cannot be cured, and not everyone can control their diabetes with tablets and diet for the rest of their lives. Many people find that despite keeping to their recommended diet and taking their tablets, their urine and blood glucose tests continue to be high. If this happens, your doctor may decide you need to change from tablets to insulin treatment. This will improve your blood glucose control and will make you feel better. You will need the support and advice of your nurses, doctor and family to help you get used to this change. Don't hesitate to ask for more help.



Yemeni Community  
Association in  
Sandwell



# Diabetes

### For more information

If you would like more information on any aspect of diabetes, telephone the Diabetes UK Care line on **0207 424 1030**

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Health Development Officer  
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## 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, and from the liver which makes glucose and passes it into the bloodstream. Insulin helps glucose enter the cells where it is used as fuel by the body. Insulin is a hormone produced by the pancreas, a gland which lies just behind the stomach.

### There are two kinds of diabetes

- Non insulin dependent diabetes is a common condition. The body can still make some insulin, but not enough for its needs. Sometimes the body does not use the insulin it makes. This type of diabetes can be treated by diet alone, or by diet and tablets, or sometimes by diet and insulin injections.
- Insulin dependent diabetes occurs when the body has a severe lack of its own insulin. It is treated by insulin injections and diet.

There is no cure for diabetes, but it can be treated so that you can enjoy a healthy, active life.

The main aim of treatment is to help you to get your blood glucose to near normal level. Together with a healthy lifestyle this will help to improve your well-being and protect against long term damage to your eyes, kidneys, nerves, heart and major arteries.

## What causes diabetes?

We know that non insulin dependent diabetes runs in families, even though your relatives may not have had it. This type of diabetes is more common in South Asian families.

### Can eating too much sugar cause diabetes?

No, not directly, but being overweight certainly can, and this may be due to eating too much sugary food. When a person is overweight, the pancreas is under great stress. This is why exercising, eating the right foods and not being overweight are so important.

## What are the main symptoms of diabetes?

These are:

- Thirst
- Passing large amounts of urine
- Losing weight
- Tiredness
- Genital itchiness
- Blurring of vision

If you have non insulin dependent diabetes you may not notice these symptoms, or there may be no symptoms at all. In fact, you may have had diabetes for some time without knowing.

## Where to go for help

If you think you may have diabetes you should go and see your doctor, who can arrange for simple blood and urine tests to be carried out to find out if you have diabetes.

### What happens next?

If you do have diabetes you will be started on treatment. Depending on the type of diabetes you have, this could be:

- diet alone, or
- diet and tablets, or
- diet and insulin injections

## Treatment

A healthy diet is an important part of your diabetes treatment. What you eat is very important to help you to control your blood glucose levels and so reduce the risk of long term problems. You do not need to stop eating all your favourite foods but you may be advised to eat less of some foods, to change some of the ingredients you use in your recipes and to use different cooking methods to make your diet healthier.

You should aim to eat regular meals based on starchy foods such as bread, cereals, rice, potatoes, pasta, chapattis and naan. Eating starchy food regularly will help you to control your blood glucose levels.