

Diabetes

Some facts about diabetes:

- There are approximately 2 million diagnosed diabetics in the UK. It is also estimated that there are a further 750 000 undiagnosed diabetics.
- More women than men develop type 2 diabetes.
- The use of steroid medication could cause type 2 DM.
- Up to a third of diabetics have a family history of type 2 diabetes.
- Your ethnicity is a contributing factor. Asian, Jewish and Afro-Caribbean races are more likely to develop Type 2 DM.
- Having high blood pressure or high cholesterol increases the risk of getting type 2 diabetes.
- In non-diabetics the concentration of glucose in the blood is automatically regulated.
- Up to two-thirds of people with type 2 diabetes have no symptoms.
- Normal blood sugar levels range between 4-7 mmol/l.
- Crucial to this is the hormone insulin, which is secreted into the blood by the pancreas and regulates the blood sugar levels.
- Insulin works on the cells of your body and makes them take in glucose from the bloodstream.
- Some of the blood glucose is used by the cells for energy, and some is converted into glycogen or fat.
- All carbohydrate foods are eventually converted to glucose.
- The rise in blood glucose levels signals important cells in the pancreas, called beta cells, to secrete insulin, which pours into the bloodstream. Within ten minutes after a meal insulin rises to its peak level.
- Excessive sugar consumption has been associated with increased rates of diabetes, tooth decay, heart disease and even cancer.

- A brisk walk of thirty minutes every day approximately halves the risk of type 2 diabetes in women.
- Antidiabetic tablets may be prescribed to increase the production of insulin and strengthen its effect.
- The main aim of treating diabetes is to keep blood glucose level as near normal as possible; to reduce any other 'risk factors' that may increase your risk of developing complications, especially to lower blood pressure if it is high and to keep cholesterol low.
- Type 2 diabetes is strongly associated with being overweight.
- One study suggested that waist circumferences greater than 35 inches in women and 40 inches in men signify increased risk for heart disease and diabetes.
- In a 2001 study of nearly 85,000 nurses, obesity was the number one risk factor for diabetes type 2. It is estimated that 80% to 95% of the current dramatic increases in type 2 diabetes is due to obesity and having excess fat in the abdominal region
- An estimated 5% of pregnant women develop a form of type 2 diabetes, usually temporary, in their third trimester called gestational diabetes.
- Gestational diabetes is a diabetic condition (nearly always temporary) that develops during the third trimester. After delivery, blood glucose levels generally return to normal, although between one-third and one-half of these women develop type 2 diabetes within 10 years.
- Between 25% to 33% of all type 2 patients have family members with diabetes. Having a first-degree relative with the disease poses a 40% risk of developing diabetes
- It is a myth that people with diabetes shouldn't eat bananas or grapes. Fruit like other starchy food such as bread, cereal, potatoes, rice, chocolate etc. is converted to glucose! The end product for all of these is the same.

For more information about diabetes go to www.diabetes.org.uk