Type 2 Diabetes

Pictorial information about Type 2 Diabetes for people with a Learning Disability

HSC Public Health Agency

HSC Northern Health and Social Care Trust
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What is Diabetes?

When we eat food, some of that food turns into sugar and we need sugar for energy.

But...

If you have diabetes there is too much sugar in your body. Your sugar level will need to be reduced.
What happens when you eat?

Food

Food is broken down into sugar

Sugar goes into the blood

If you have diabetes the sugar stays in your blood
Symptoms of Type 2 Diabetes

- Thirsty
- Moody/Grumpy
- Tired
- Go to the toilet a lot especially at night
- Weight loss
- Blurred vision
How do we know that you have Diabetes?

• Urinalysis
  • We check for sugar in your urine

• Blood sample
  • We check to see if you have sugar in your blood
Managing Diabetes

Healthy Eating

Exercise

Medication/Insulin

It is important to eat a healthy diet, exercise and take your tablets or insulin every day.
How to measure the level of sugar in your blood

1. Glucose meter

2. Wash and dry your hands

3. Prick your finger

4. Put blood onto test strip. Get blood result

5. Record your results

6. Dispose of needle in sharps box
If your blood sugar level is 4 or below ↓, this is called Hypoglycaemia (a hypo).

**Symptoms**

- Sweating
- Worrying/Anxious
- Feeling faint or shaky

If your blood sugar is below 4 and you have any of the above symptoms tell your carer, nurse or doctor. The treatment is:

**Take**

- A glass of a sugary fizzy drink (not diet drinks)
- A biscuit or sandwich

**Recheck your blood sugar level**
If your blood sugar level is 14 or above this is called Hyperglycaemia

**Symptoms**

- Tired
- Thirsty
- Go to the toilet a lot
- Feeling unwell
- Thrush

If your blood sugar is 14 or above and you have any of the above symptoms. You should:

Drink more water and tell your carer, nurse or doctor
Insulin injections

Some people may need to take insulin injections

Possible Sites For Injection:
- Upper thigh + buttocks
  Slow insulin absorption
- Abdomen
  Quick insulin absorption

Upper leg, bottom, tummy

Your nurse will teach you about injection sites and how to give your insulin
Healthy diet
It is important to eat a healthy diet

Try to eat these foods

- Vegetables ✓
- Fruit ✓
- Porridge Oats/ unsweetened cereal ✓
- Bread ✓
- Pasta ✓
- Potatoes ✓
- Rice ✓
- Meat ✓
- Chicken ✓
- Fish ✓
- Eggs ✓
- Beans ✓
- Yogurts (sugar free) ✓
- Cheese (low fat) ✓
Try not to have these foods/drinks

- Fried foods
- Biscuits, sweets, cake
- Pastry foods
- Sugary cereal
- Crisps
- Sugar
- Fizzy drinks
Have regular meals and snacks - try not to over eat

- Breakfast ✓
- Fruit ✓
- Lunch ✓
- Fruit ✓
- Evening meal ✓
- Supper ✓
Benefits of exercise

- Makes you feel good
- Helps keep your weight down
- Lowers your blood pressure
- Improves blood flow around the body

How much exercise should you take?

30 minutes
5 days a week
Exercise regularly

Walking ✓
Swimming ✓
Climbing stairs ✓
Cycling ✓
Running ✓

Talk to your doctor or nurse about what type of exercise is best for you.
Exercise

Bowling ✓

Gardening ✓

Dancing ✓

Cleaning ✓

Ask your doctor or nurse what exercise you can do safely
Regular health checks are essential to reduce complications from diabetes

**Eyes** - checked yearly by the specialist
1. Health of eyes checked
2. Eye test

**Heart** - checked yearly by G.P.
1. Blood pressure - often
2. Blood test - yearly

**Feet** - checked yearly by podiatrist. Check your feet every day for redness, pain or cuts (Tell your family or carer if you have any of these)
1. Nails cut - regularly
2. Skin checked - daily

Your **kidneys** may become damaged with diabetes
Your blood and urine needs to be tested regularly

Sometimes diabetes can make us feel sad, it’s good to talk to someone about how you feel
Heart problems
Diabetes can cause people to develop heart disease or cause a stroke. You should:

- Get your blood pressure checked
- Eat a healthy diet
- Get weighed
- Stop Smoking
- Exercise
- Have a yearly blood test called HbA1c and a cholesterol test
Eye care

Diabetes can damage your eyes

It is important that you have your eyes tested yearly

The Eye Test

You will need to read letters from a chart

You will need to sit at the camera machine.
The photographer will take two photographs of each eye.
It will not hurt you.
This will show if there is any damage to the back of the eye.
You may need to have a further check up.
Footcare

(a podiatrist is a specialist who looks after your feet)

- Wash feet daily - warm water - not hot! Feel the water before putting your feet in the water
- Dry well between toes
- Put on moisturiser, NOT between toes
- Check your feet everyday for redness, pain or cuts. (Tell your family or carer if you have any of these)

- Cut nails straight across
- Do NOT cut down sides of nail
- Do NOT cut nails too short
- If your nails are difficult to cut or you cannot see properly to cut them speak to your podiatrist

- Make sure your shoes fit properly
- Check inside for any sharp edges
- Make sure your shoes and socks are not too tight
- Never walk around in bare feet

- Avoid direct heat from fires
- No hot water bottles
- Don’t let your feet get sunburnt

- Attend podiatry at least once a year for a full assessment. Diabetes can make your feet feel numb
- Contact the podiatrist between appointments if you have any foot problems
Annual check-up

Blood pressure

Eyes

Blood

Weight

Feet

Looking after yourself, reduces the risk of developing complications associated with diabetes
Acknowledgements

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The booklet has been produced in response to need identified by Diabetes Nurse Specialists in Northern Ireland, for an information resource to assist clinicians to support people with a learning disability and their carers to manage type 2 diabetes. The information can be downloaded as a complete booklet or as individual sheets from the Northern Trust website www.northerntrust.hscni.net

This booklet has been designed and developed through stakeholder consultation. Every effort has been made to ensure that the information provided is correct. However, we cannot be responsible for any actions as a result of using this information.

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