

Health and wellbeing fact sheet

Prevent diabetes: help yourself to stay healthy

What is diabetes?

Diabetes Mellitus is a condition in which the amount of glucose (sugar) in the blood is too high because the body cannot use it properly. Glucose comes from foods such as bread, rice, potatoes, sugar and other sweet foods, and from the liver which makes glucose.

Insulin is vital for life. It is a hormone produced by the pancreas, which helps the glucose to enter the cells where it is used as fuel for the body.

What are the different types of diabetes?

- **Type 1 diabetes or insulin dependant diabetes** develops when the body can't produce any insulin. This type of diabetes usually appears before the age of 40.
- **Type 2 diabetes or diet/medication controlled diabetes** develops when the body can still make some insulin, but not enough, or when the insulin that is produced does not work properly. It usually appears in people over the age of 40. It also runs in families and is more common in men.

Who else is at risk of developing Type 2 diabetes?

- People who are overweight or obese, people who are not physically active and people who suffer from high blood pressure or have had a stroke or heart attack in the past.

What are the signs and symptoms of diabetes?

- Increased thirst, going to the loo all the time especially at night, extreme tiredness, weight loss, blurred vision, genital itching or regular episodes of thrush and slow healing of wounds.

What can I do to help myself?

- Adopt sensible eating habits,
- Loose or maintain a healthy weight,
- Increase your physical activity,
- If you have any symptoms contact your GP for a diagnostic test.

For more information visit www.diabetes.org.uk or www.nhsdirect.nhs.gov
