

What is Diabetes?

Diabetes is a lifelong condition that causes a person's blood sugar level to become too high.

The amount of sugar in the blood is controlled by a hormone called insulin, which is produced by the pancreas (a gland behind the stomach). When food is digested and enters your bloodstream, insulin moves glucose out of the blood and into cells, where it is broken down to produce energy.

However, if you have diabetes, your body is unable to break down glucose into energy. This is because there is either not enough insulin to move the glucose, or the insulin produced doesn't work properly.

There are two main types of diabetes – type 1 diabetes and type 2 diabetes.

In type 1 diabetes, the body's immune system attacks and destroys the cells that produce insulin, so people need to inject insulin to replace it. It is sometimes known as juvenile diabetes or early-onset diabetes because it usually develops before the age of 40, often during the teenage years.

Type 2 diabetes is where the body doesn't produce enough insulin, or the body's cells don't react to insulin. This is known as insulin resistance. It is far more common than type 1 diabetes – in the UK around 90% of all adults with diabetes have type 2 diabetes. If you are diagnosed with type 2 diabetes, you may be able to control your symptoms simply by eating a healthy diet, exercising regularly, and monitoring your blood glucose levels, though sometimes it progresses to need medication.

Across Newark & Sherwood there are over 6,700 people diagnosed with diabetes – that is about 6.5% of our adult population. It is expected to rise by 50% by 2030. It is estimated that Newark & Sherwood has about 1,500 people who have yet to be diagnosed.

For further information see NHS Choices at www.nhs.uk

Diabetes

With over 1 in 15 of Newark & Sherwood's adult population diagnosed with diabetes (and rising), it is a condition that is frequently seen in general practice.

It is very important for diabetes to be diagnosed as early as possible, because it will get progressively worse if left untreated. If you have symptoms such as feeling thirsty, passing urine more often than usual, and feeling tired all the time then you should see your GP or ask at your surgery for an NHS Health Check.

NHS Health Check

The NHS Health Check is your chance to get your free midlife MOT. For adults in England aged 40-74 without a pre-existing condition, it checks your circulatory and vascular health and what your risk of getting diabetes is.

We asked Luella Robb, lead practice nurse at Sherwood Medical Partnership, what a diabetes check involves.

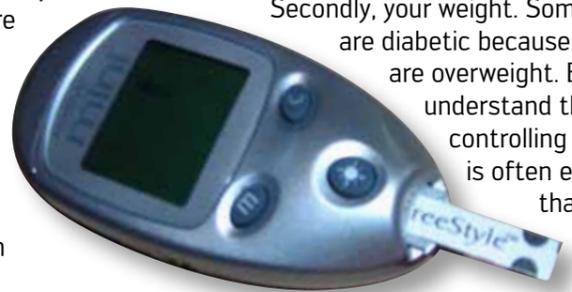


Regardless of which type of diabetes people have, there are three things that matter. Firstly, what you eat. Your body's tissues have a memory so it is the amount of sugar that you eat over a period of time that matters.

For some people we will monitor this with a blood test. We will measure your blood pressure and cholesterol.

Secondly, your weight. Some people are diabetic because they are overweight. But we understand that controlling your weight is often easier said than done, so we will try to help you.

Thirdly there are complications of diabetes. These develop slowly over time so we keep a check. I don't want to worry you, but changes to your eyes, feet, kidneys and nerves can result in long-term disability so it is very important that we help you manage your diabetes well.



What happens at your Diabetes Review?

- Take your height and weight to check if you are under or overweight.
- Take your blood pressure.
- Review your blood glucose control.
- Review your cholesterol levels.
- Discuss lifestyle issues such as diet and exercise.
- Discuss any issues you have.

During your Diabetes review, you will have the opportunity to agree action plans for lifestyle changes and offered support/changes in medication as needed.

Some of the things you can do to help manage your Diabetes, and to live healthier in general include:

Healthy Eating

You can control your blood sugar levels with simple healthier eating. Things to look out for include:



- Eat unprocessed food, such as lean meat, fresh fruit and vegetables, fish, whole meal bread. Processed food has lots of hidden sugar and fat within it.
- Reduce the amount of salt in your diet.
- Remember: everything in moderation.

Being more active

Doing a little extra exercise a week, will really help improve your health, and there are a number of groups you can join that can help you with this.

By taking the care to eat more healthily, or take up more exercise you greatly reduce your chances of developing Diabetes, or of it becoming worse if you already have it.

We want you to look after yourself to reduce the chance of developing eye, foot or kidney problems, or of having heart attacks and strokes later in life.

You can check your own risk of diabetes with an online tool at: www.nhs.uk/Tools/Pages/Diabetes.aspx

Q&A

Luella Robb – CCG Diabetes Lead Nurse & Practice Nurse at Sherwood Medical Partnership

A little about your role

1. What is your job title, and what does your role entail?

I am the Lead Practice Nurse at Sherwood Medical Partnership and lead a team of nurses and health care assistants across three sites. I am an independent prescriber and my particular interest is in long term condition management.

2. How long have you been in your role, and how long have you worked as a practice nurse?

I have been a practice nurse for 13 years, and in my current role for just over 3 years.

3. Tell us about your role in improving care for people living with Diabetes.

I am on the joint Newark and Sherwood CCG multidisciplinary diabetes work stream which meets once a month to improve diabetes outcomes across the Newark and Sherwood area.

4. What satisfaction do you get from your job?

I get great satisfaction from helping patients feel better and be able to get on with their normal lives.

5. What do you wish patients knew more about Diabetes?

The devastating complications that could happen years down the line without good blood sugar control early on in the diagnosis. This is why it is really important to make an appointment if you have any of the signs of Diabetes, and to have regular checkups if you have been diagnosed.

A little about you

6. What do you do in your spare time? What is your favourite hobby? I grow vegetables, and have some chickens, so I really enjoy spending time in my garden. I love walking. I also like to sew, read and write.

7. What is your greatest achievement?

Three years ago I designed and led the change to a nurse led long term condition service at Clipstone Health Centre. This helped to achieve a reduction in the number of appointments needed for patients with long term conditions, by giving nurses the ability to do medication reviews and adjust treatments accordingly, and having trained health care assistants to complete a full holistic review of the patients.