

Diabetes Handout

Diabetes Mellitis:

Diabetes Mellitis is a condition in which the amount of glucose in the body cannot be properly controlled. Glucose comes from the digestion of starchy foods such as:

- + Bread or potatoes and
- + Sugary foods

Glucose levels are controlled by insulin, a hormone produced in the pancreas, which lowers such levels by converting glucose into glycogen, which is then stored in the liver.

The main symptoms of untreated diabetes are:

- + Thirst
- + The passage of large amounts of urine
- + Extreme tiredness
- + Weight loss
- + Genital itching
- + Blurred vision

Diabetes Mellitis:

The main area of treatment is to restore near normal blood glucose levels. Together with a healthy lifestyle this will help improve well-being and protect against long-term damage to the:

- + Eyes
- + Kidneys
- + Nerves
- + Heart
- + Major arteries

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There are 2 different types of Diabetes Mellitus

- ✚ TYPE 1 - is insulin dependent diabetes. This develops when there has been a severe lack of insulin in the body because most of the pancreatic cells which manufacture insulin have been destroyed. This type of diabetes usually appears before the age of 40 years. The cause is not known but viruses may play a part. It is treated with insulin replacement and diet
- ✚ TYPE 2 - develops when the body can still make some insulin, though not enough for its needs, or when the insulin that the body does make is not used properly. This type of diabetes usually appears in people over the age of 40 years. It is most common among the elderly and the overweight. The tendency to develop this form of diabetes may be passed from one generation to the next. It is usually treated by diet alone.

Hypoglycaemia is the medical term for a state produced by a lower than normal level of blood glucose. The term literally means "under-sweet blood"

Symptoms of Hypoglycaemia:

The main symptoms associated with hypoglycaemia are:

- Sweating
- Fatigue
- Feeling dizzy

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Symptoms of hypoglycaemia can also include:

- Being pale
- Feeling weak
- Feeling hungry
- A higher heart rate than usual
- Blurred vision
- Temporary loss of consciousness
- Confusion
- Convulsions
- And in extreme cases, coma

How to treat hypoglycaemia:

A mild case of hypoglycaemia can be treated through eating or drinking approximately sugar (i.e. carbohydrates). Some diabetics carry glucose tablets for this express purpose.

Serious hypoglycaemia will require medical attention. In this instance, paramedics will use glucagon or provide glucose intravenously. Some diabetics have glucagons injections at home, in the form of glucagons kits.

Hyperglycaemia

Hyperglycaemia occurs when people with diabetes have too much sugar in their bloodstream.

Hyperglycaemia should not be confused with **hypoglycaemia**, which is when blood sugar levels go too low. You should aim to avoid spending long periods of time with high blood glucose levels.

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The main 3 symptoms of high blood sugar levels are increased urination, increased thirst and increased hunger.

High blood sugar levels can contribute to the following symptoms:

- Regular/above average urination
- Weakness or feeling tired
- Loss of weight
- Increased thirst
- Vision blurring

Detecting ketones

- Ketones are easily detected by a simple urine test, using strips available on prescription.
- People with diabetes should test their urine for ketones if their blood glucose is high (usually over 15mmol/l) or if they have any symptoms of ketoacidosis.

If an individual discovers high levels of ketones in their urine (the test strips will tell you if levels are high), and especially if their blood glucose levels are high, they should call their doctor or diabetes specialist nurse immediately, or go to their nearest casualty department.

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Treatment

- Type 1
 - Insulin injections/tablets and *controlled diet*
 - Type 2
 - Controlled diet
 - *Regular exercise and maintenance of the ideal body weight are important to all diabetics*
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- Diabetes Mellitus is a condition affecting over 2 million people in the UK
 - It is a *life threatening* condition
 - It affects a person's *lifestyle* because of the *adjustments* that have to be made to *manage* the disease
 - A *healthy lifestyle* and lots of *exercise* are just as important as any *drugs* that may be prescribed