The Highs and Lows of Self-Managing Diabetes

Group Discussion

St Albans & District Voluntary Group

Coordinated by Peter Warman

3rd March 2020

Reliable information on the self–management of diabetes

The St Albans District and Surrounding Area Diabetes Group links to with Diabetes UK:

https://st-albans.diabetesukgroup.org

This web site provides us with up-to-date information on our activities and many national resources to help us self-manage our Diabetes.

The Challenges of Self Management

Keeping diabetes under control requires **daily self-management whatever the stage the condition has reached.**

We need to understand **what is likely to change our blood sugar levels** and how this can vary during the day and night.

Everyone with Diabetes seems slightly different in their body's **blood sugar level responses to exercise and food**… any guidance has to be tested for its effects on me, personally, rather than just taking guidance from the literature.

DIABETES UK
KNOW DIABETES. FIGHT DIABETES.

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Home > Guide to diabetes

Save for later

Living with diabetes

Living with diabetes is difficult. There are so many factors to consider and this can be stressful, but you shouldn't need to put your life on hold. This section will provide you with the information you need on how you can fit diabetes around your lifestyle, from what to eat to how you can treat and manage your condition effectively.

Emotions and diabetes

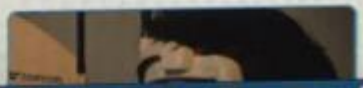
Diabetes isn't just a physical condition, it can affect you emotionally too. We can help you get the right emotional support.

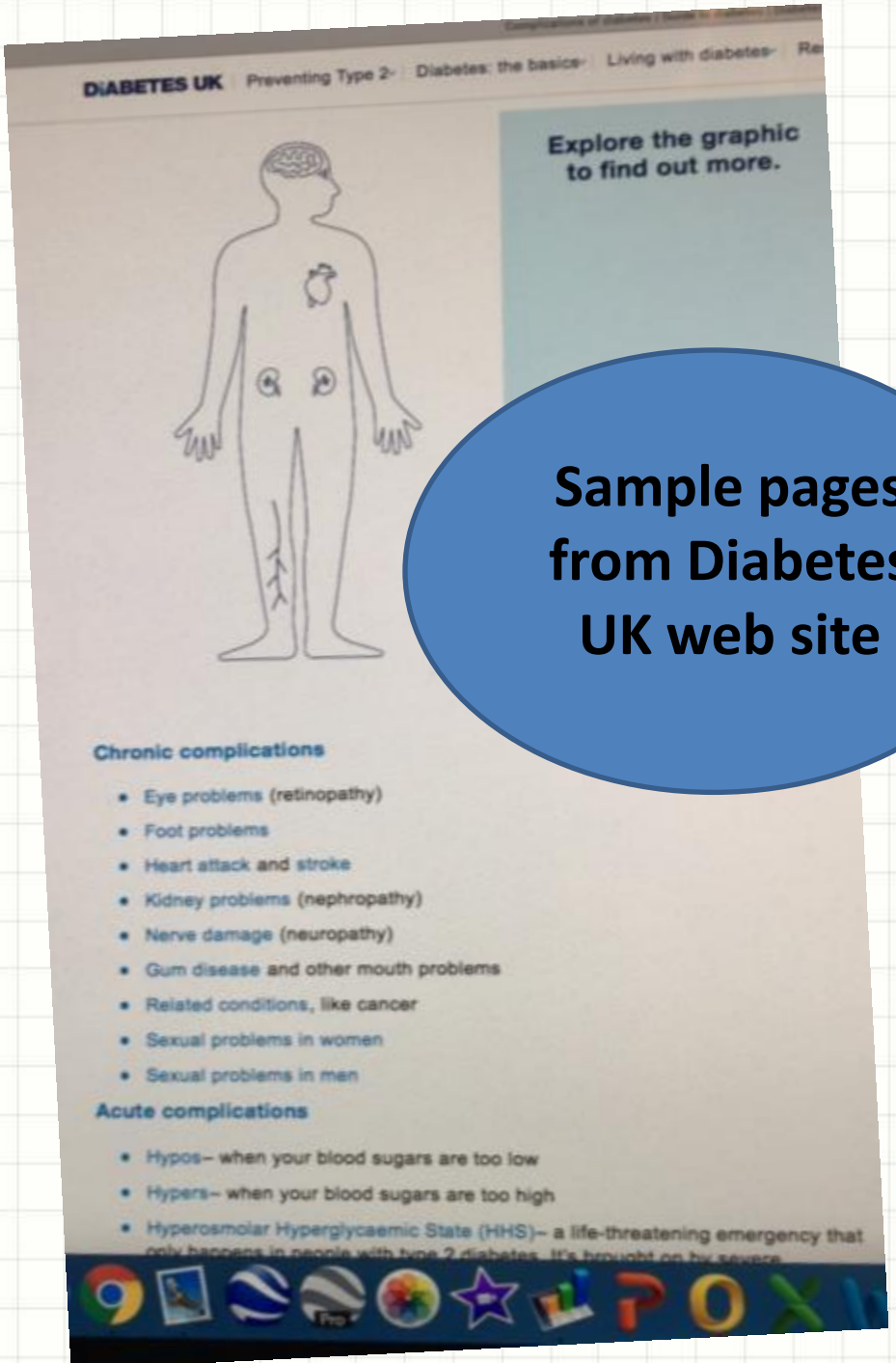
Life with diabetes

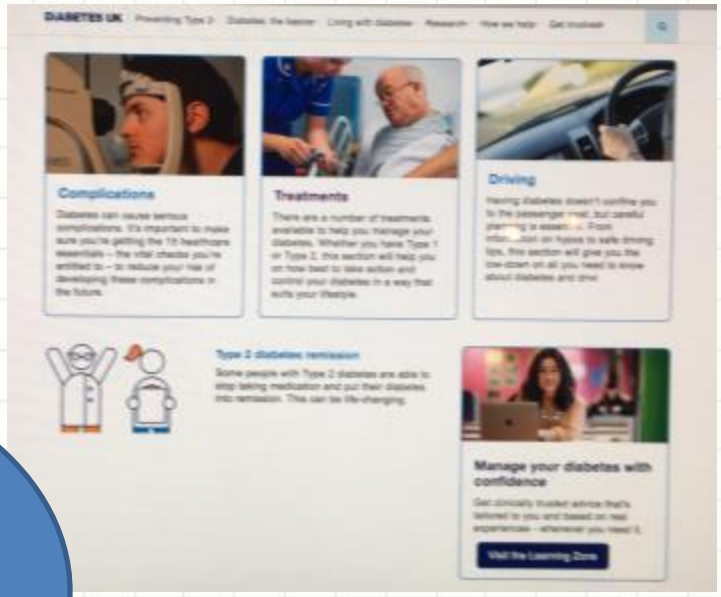
Living with diabetes can throw up a lot of questions, like how it fits into your daily life and what your rights are. We've got advice and information to help.

Food and exercise

The foods you eat can affect your diabetes management, how well you feel and how much energy you have, but there is no such thing as a 'diabetic diet' or food plan. Keeping active is also good for our overall health and wellbeing.







Sample pages from Diabetes UK web site

Section 1

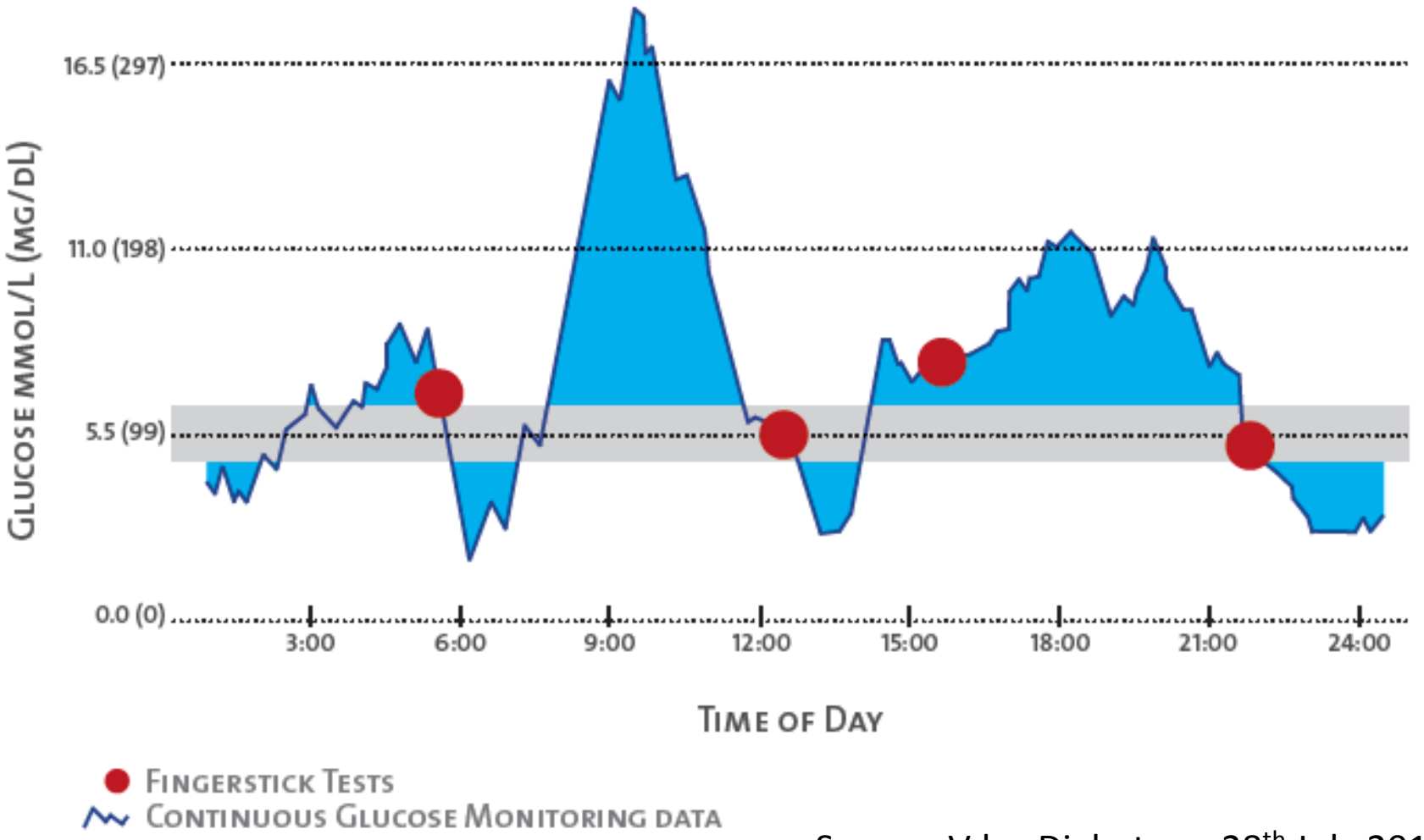
What have you learnt about how to manage Diabetes?

What has become routine?

What remains a challenge?

What questions do you still need answering?

Current Protocol: Fingerstick readings



Source: Vdex Diabetes – 28th July 2017

Section 2

Living a more active lifestyle

HCP and Patient

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Source: Diabetes Scotland, 2017.

It's important to take steps to maintain a healthy weight, eat well and be active.

What are the benefits of physical activity?

As well as being important for weight management, getting active can help you feel less stressed, sleep better and have more energy. Doing just a little bit more, every day, will make a big difference to your health.

How much activity?

Do 20-30 minutes every day, aiming for 150 minutes a week. Any activity counts if it makes you:

- Breathe faster
- Increase your heart rate
- Feel warmer

Include some activity that strengthens your muscles, like gardening or carrying shopping, **twice a week**.

Top tips to getting active

Start slow. Increase your activity levels by introducing simple activities and gradually increase the intensity and time you spend on them. Your muscles will get stronger with time.

Make small changes to your daily life. Walking is free, and a great way of getting fitter. Enjoy a walk in your local park, get off the bus a stop early or leave the car at home for small trips.

Get a pedometer (step counter) or use an app. Challenge yourself to add extra steps per day to your normal activity level. You should aim to reach 10,000 steps per day.

Get fit with friends. Instead of meeting friends for a coffee or to watch TV, go for a walk in the park, visit the shops, play tennis or hit the dancefloor.

Sit less and move more. Get up and walk around every 30 minutes and try standing whilst watching TV or on the phone.

Keep it interesting and fun. From aerobics to Zumba, there's an activity out there for you. Try and find new activities you enjoy. You're more likely to stick to an activity you enjoy.

Ask about local support. Many areas have walking groups or free exercise sessions.

www.aliss.org is a search and collaboration tool for Health and Wellbeing resources in Scotland that will signpost on to lifestyle interventions in your area, helping you make lifestyle changes around diet, exercise and emotional health to manage their diabetes.

Don't give up! Although your body benefits as soon as you become more active, you may not see changes straight away. It can take time for your body to get used to the activity, so keep going and **set goals that are right for you.**

It's important to check with your doctor or practice nurse if you have any complications that may restrict your ability to be active.

Section 3

The challenges of choosing the balanced diet

EATING WELL WITH DIABETES

It's important you take steps to maintain a healthy weight, eat well and be active. You should be referred to dietitian for individual dietary advice tailored to meet your needs. To get you started this provides you with some basics for healthy eating.

No foods are strictly prohibited for people with Type 2 diabetes. However the aim is to have the same healthy balanced diet that's recommended for anyone – choose wholegrains and eat more fruit and veg, pulses and fish. For hundreds of delicious recipe ideas and practical advice on healthy eating, go to www.diabetes.org/enjoyfood.

Top tips for eating well, while still enjoying food

Eat regular meals. Have 3 meals a day. Avoid skipping meals and space your breakfast, lunch and evening meal out over the day. This will keep your blood glucose levels steady and control your appetite.

Eat more fruit and vegetables. Fruit and vegetables will give your body the vitamins, minerals and fibre it needs. We should all aim to eat at least 5 portions a day. Choose whole fruits and vegetables rather than juices and smoothies. Smoothies are often high in calories, not to mention fat and sugar, and many fruit juices contain added sugars.

Eat more beans. Kidney beans, chickpeas and lentils are packed with nutrients. Try them hot in soups or casseroles, cold in salads or in low-fat hummus and dhal. They are low in fat, high in fibre and cheap to buy.

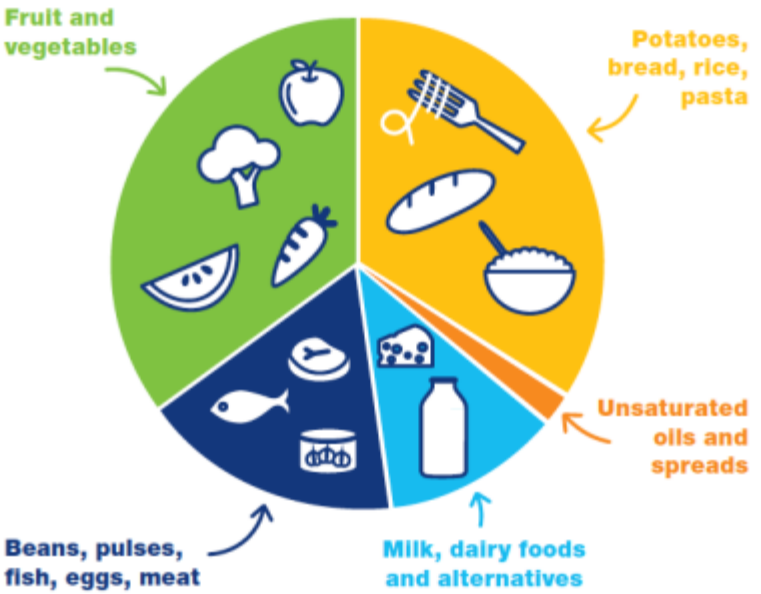
Dish up the fish. Aim to eat at least two portions of fish, including one of oily fish, a week. Examples of oily fish include mackerel, sardines, salmon and pilchards. Oily fish are rich in Omega 3 oils which protect against heart disease.

Cut down on sugar. A healthy diet can include some sugar – but you need to reduce the amount you eat. Choose sugar-free, diet or no-added sugar drinks, and make sure you're reading food labels to spot sugar in other foods. See label reading section for more information.

EATING A BALANCED DIET

Eating well

We should all eat healthily – and it's especially helpful for those of us with diabetes. This guide shows the five food groups and how much of what you eat each day should come from each food group. It's important to eat a variety of foods from each group to get all the goodness you need.



6-8 glasses/cups of drinks like water, lower-fat milk or sugar-free drinks.

Limit fruit juice/ smoothies to a total of 150ml per day

Source: Diabetes Scotland, 2017.

Section 4

Getting good advice and treatment from the medical profession

Preparing for the Annual Review and feedback from my GP

Understanding test results and my medication options

Checklist of the fifteen healthcare essentials

15 HEALTHCARE ESSENTIALS

The minimum level of healthcare everyone with diabetes should receive

Having the right care is essential for the wellbeing of all people with diabetes. There is a minimum level of healthcare that every person with diabetes deserves and should expect. Here are the **15 essential checks and services you should receive.**

Use this list to talk to your healthcare team about your individual needs as part of your annual care planning review, where you should agree your priorities, targets and a written plan of action to help you reach them.

1. **Get your blood glucose levels measured** at least once a year. An HbA1c blood test measures your overall blood glucose control over the previous three months and helps you and your diabetes healthcare team set your own target. This long-term picture is different from self-monitoring your blood glucose levels, which indicates your blood glucose level at the time of the test. For many people with diabetes self-monitoring is necessary to manage their diabetes well. Not everyone needs to self-monitor, but if you do you should have access to test strips and the equipment you need.
2. **Have your blood pressure measured** and recorded at least once a year, and agree a personal target that is right for you.
3. **Have your blood fats (such as cholesterol and triglycerides) measured** every year. Like blood glucose levels and blood pressure, you should have your own targets that are realistic and achievable.
4. **Have your eyes screened for signs of retinopathy** every year by your local diabetic eye screening service*. A special camera is used to take a photo of your retina (at the back of your eye) and a specialist will look for any changes. This free test is different to the checks carried out by an optician. If you notice any sight changes between appointments it is important to contact your optometrist or GP.
5. **Have your feet and legs checked.** The skin, circulation and nerve supply of your feet and legs should be examined at least once a year, normally by your GP or practice nurse, but also if problems arise or on admission to hospital. You should be told if you are at risk of foot problems, how serious they are and if you need to be referred to a specialist podiatrist or foot clinic.
6. **Have your kidney function monitored** annually. You should have two tests: a urine test for protein (a sign of possible kidney problems) and a blood test to measure kidney function.
7. **Get individual, ongoing dietary advice** from a healthcare professional with appropriate expertise in nutrition, and be referred to a dietitian for tailored advice if necessary. You should have the opportunity to check your weight and get the support and information you need to manage your weight.
8. **Get emotional and psychological support.** Being diagnosed with diabetes and living with a long term condition can be difficult. You should be able to talk about your issues and concerns with specialist healthcare professionals.
9. **Be offered a group education course** in your local area, on diagnosis or as a yearly refresher, to help you understand and manage your diabetes. If you are unable or don't wish to attend a group course, you should be offered an alternative.
10. **See specialist diabetes healthcare professionals** to help you manage your diabetes. Diabetes affects different parts of the body and you should be referred to specialist professionals when needed, such as a diabetes specialist nurse, dietitian, ophthalmologist, pharmacist or podiatrist.
11. **Get a free flu vaccination** every year from your GP. People with diabetes are at greater risk of severe illness, such as pneumonia, if they get flu. You should also be given a personal care plan telling you what steps to take if you are ill.
12. **Receive high-quality care if admitted to hospital.** If you have to stay in hospital, you should still receive high-quality diabetes care from specialist healthcare professionals, whether you have been admitted due to your diabetes or not.
13. **Have the opportunity to talk about any sexual problems** you might be experiencing. Diabetes increases the risk of sexual dysfunction in both men and women and can be caused by physical, emotional and lifestyle factors, or medication you might be taking. You should be assessed and given support and education, and referred to an appropriate service if necessary.
14. **If you smoke,** get support and advice on how to quit. Diabetes increases your risk of heart disease and stroke, and smoking further increases this risk.
15. **Get information and specialist care if you are planning to have a baby.** Your diabetes control has to be a lot tighter and monitored very closely before and during pregnancy. You should expect support from specialist healthcare professionals at every stage from preconception to post-natal care.

For more information on the 15 Healthcare Essentials and what to do if you're not getting them, go to: **www.diabetes.org.uk/15-essentials**

For information, advice and support call our Helpline on **0141 212 8710****

* In some areas this may be every two years for those with no problems.
**Calls may be recorded for quality and training purposes.

Source: Diabetes Scotland, 2017.

Section 5

What are the benefits of being Part of the St Albans and District Group?

Structured programme of talks by medical professionals

Questions and answers over a two-hour session

Shared experiences and resources with other patients

Keeping up-to-date of what treatments and services for diabetes are available

Suggestions to improve our monthly meetings?

Attracting greater involvement of all ages

CONTACT DETAILS :

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