

**DiABETES UK**  
KNOW DIABETES. FIGHT DIABETES.



# YOUR GUIDE TO TYPE 2 DIABETES

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# JUST BEEN DIAGNOSED

If you've just been diagnosed with type 2 diabetes, there's a lot of information to take in.

It's important to remember that your diagnosis is not your fault. Type 2 diabetes is a complex condition with a variety of causes.

We've made this guide to give you an overview of type 2 diabetes, the health checks you should get, and advice and support for managing it. There's a lot you'll need to think about but there's support available to you along the way.

With all the facts and the right care, it's possible to lead a full life with type 2 diabetes. And we're here to support you.

## What's next?

You probably have lots of questions about what changes you may need to make to your everyday life. Depending on your individual needs, you may have to consider the following things.

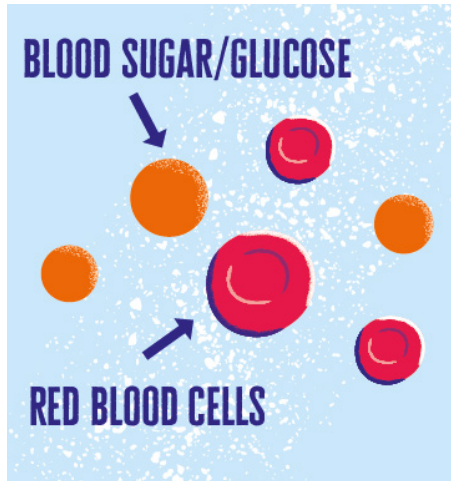
- You'll need to have regular health checks – **page 12** – to understand how diabetes is affecting your body, and to keep yourself healthy.
- Eating a healthy diet – **page 23** – and being physically active – **page 31** –, as this is very important in managing type 2 diabetes.
- You might need to take regular medication – **page 19**.
- Stopping smoking as smoking increases your risk of heart disease and stroke. You can get support with this from your GP.
- You may be advised about free courses to help you learn more about managing type 2 diabetes. You can ask your GP about these courses.

While this might feel overwhelming now, committing to making small, manageable changes can help you live a healthier life and feel confident in managing your diabetes. It may even be possible to put your diabetes into remission, which can be life-changing. Find out more about remission on **page 20** and at [diabetes.org.uk/remission](https://diabetes.org.uk/remission)

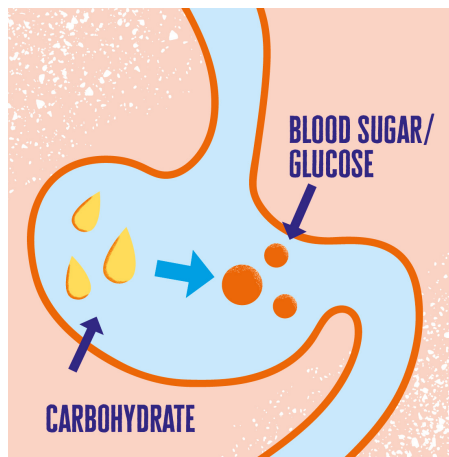


# WHAT IS TYPE 2 DIABETES?

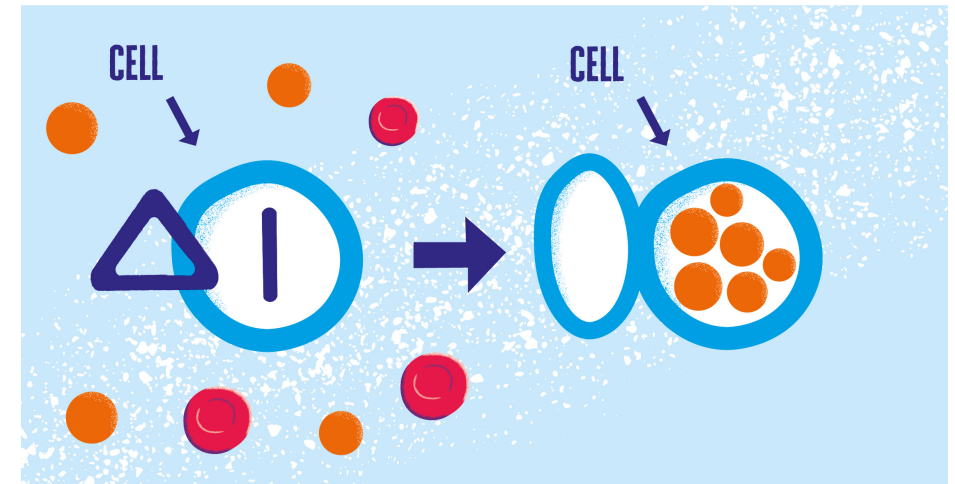
Type 2 diabetes is a serious condition where your blood sugar levels, also known as blood glucose levels, are too high. This happens because your body doesn't make enough of a hormone called insulin – or the insulin it makes doesn't work very well.



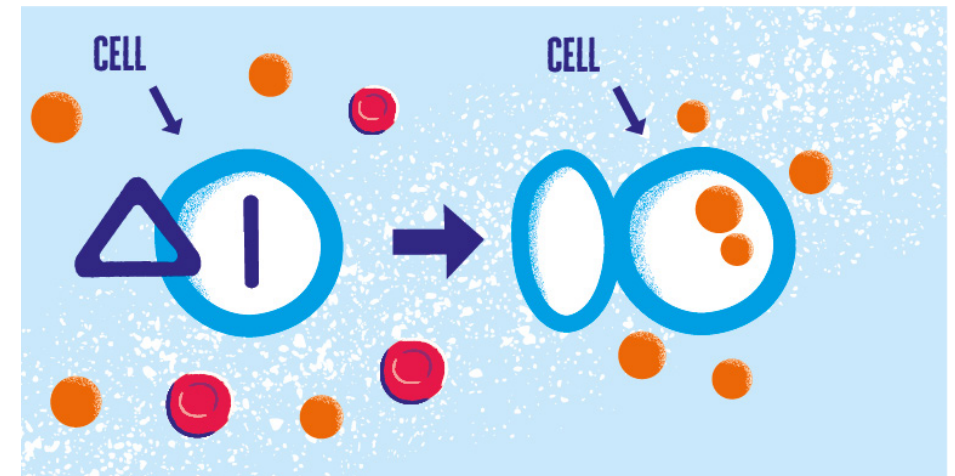
When you eat or drink, any carbohydrates you've had are turned into glucose, a type of sugar.



Insulin unlocks the cells in the body to let the sugar in to give you energy.



If you have type 2 diabetes, not all the sugar can be let in, so it builds up in the blood.



High blood sugar levels over time can affect any part of your body and can cause other health problems. To manage your type 2 diabetes, it's important to keep your blood sugar levels within a certain range. Learn about managing your diabetes on **page 12**.

## What causes type 2 diabetes?

There is a lot of stigma around type 2 diabetes and many people think that it's caused by eating too much sugar or living with obesity or overweight. It's true that these can increase your risk of developing it, but type 2 diabetes is a complex condition and they don't cause it alone.

Type 2 diabetes is a largely misunderstood condition, but we know much more now than we did even ten years ago. No one thing causes type 2 diabetes. It's caused by a combination of factors and the reason someone develops it will be individual to them.

## You are at an increased risk of type 2 diabetes if:

- you're over the age of 25 and African Caribbean, Black African, or South Asian – Indian, Pakistani or Bangladeshi
- you're over the age of 40 and White
- you're living with obesity or overweight
- you have a high waist measurement
- you have a family history of type 2 diabetes
- you have a history of high blood pressure, heart attack or strokes, gestational diabetes, or certain mental health conditions
- you take certain medications such as steroids.

# COPING WITH YOUR DIAGNOSIS

**How are you feeling about your diagnosis? If it's come as a shock, know that you're not alone. You might be feeling overwhelmed by all the information you need to take in. But you don't need to know it all right now. Take as much time as you need to understand what type 2 diabetes is, and what you might need to do to manage it.**

Type 2 diabetes is a serious condition. You'll probably need to think about what you eat and how much you exercise. You might need to start taking medication. This can feel daunting. But many people with type 2 diabetes say that they get used to these changes and find balance in their life.

don't ignore the way you feel. If you find that your feelings are stopping you from managing your diabetes, it's time to seek extra support. Getting the emotional support you need is just as important as any other part of your treatment.

For more information about looking after your emotional wellbeing, visit [diabetes.org.uk/t2-emotions](https://diabetes.org.uk/t2-emotions)

## Your emotional wellbeing

We all have different ways of coping with things. Whatever your approach,



**When I was diagnosed, I really blamed myself. It took me a long time to realise that it wasn't actually my fault and that it was something that was out of my control.**

Gina, lives with type 2 diabetes





### Talk about how you're feeling

Talking to those around you about your health issues can be difficult – they may not know much about type 2 diabetes and how it affects your daily life. But most people find

they get more support and can cope better once they open up about their diabetes. Try to help family and friends understand how they can help you while you're adjusting to your new way of life.

Talk to your healthcare team about any worries and, if needed, ask for specialist support.

If you have symptoms of depression alongside your diagnosis, please talk to your GP or healthcare team.

### Looking after yourself and managing stress

Stress can affect your blood sugar levels and how you manage your condition. Managing diabetes on top of life's ups and downs can itself be stressful.

Aim to look after yourself without worrying about doing everything perfectly. Make time to rest and unwind.

There are many misconceptions about diabetes. It's understandable that you might be worried about feeling judged or like you've done something wrong. Remember that your diagnosis is nothing to be ashamed of. Be kind to yourself and celebrate small successes. You can make small, sustainable changes every day without putting too much pressure on yourself.

Find out more about coping with stress at [diabetes.org.uk/manage-stress](https://diabetes.org.uk/manage-stress)

### Connect with others living with diabetes

- Join one of our local groups to meet other people who live with diabetes and talk about

your experiences. Find out more at [diabetes.org.uk/t2-groups](https://diabetes.org.uk/t2-groups)

- Get involved with our online communities on Facebook, X – formerly Twitter –, Instagram, YouTube and LinkedIn. Search for Diabetes UK to find us.
- Join our online support forum at [diabetes.org.uk/t2-forum](https://diabetes.org.uk/t2-forum) to find tips, advice and emotional support, and be part of a welcoming community.

### Get in touch with us

Our helpline is available Monday to Friday, 9am to 6pm. We offer specialist information and advice about all aspects of living with type 2 diabetes. Get in touch to ask any questions, or just to talk to someone who knows about diabetes.

#### England, Wales and Northern Ireland

Call **0345 123 2399**  
Email [helpline@diabetes.org.uk](mailto:helpline@diabetes.org.uk)

#### Scotland

Call **0141 212 8710**  
Email [helpline.scotland@diabetes.org.uk](mailto:helpline.scotland@diabetes.org.uk)

# MANAGING TYPE 2 DIABETES

Getting the right health checks, eating healthy food, being more active, and possibly starting diabetes medication will help you stay healthy and reduce your risk of diabetes-related complications. Because everyone's different, it can take time to figure out what works best for you. Your healthcare team will talk to you about the best way to manage your diabetes.

## Managing your blood sugar levels

Managing your blood sugar levels and keeping them within the right target range for you is a very important part of diabetes management. If blood sugar levels are too high for too long, this can affect other parts of your body and cause other health problems known as diabetes complications.

Treatments to manage your blood sugar levels include healthy eating – [page 23](#) –, being physically active – [page 31](#) –, and taking diabetes medication if needed – [page 19](#).

Checking your blood sugar levels is part of diabetes management. There are different ways to do this.

### HbA1c test

This is a blood test that checks your average blood sugar levels over the last two to three months. You should have this blood test at your GP surgery or diabetes clinic at least once a year to see how your diabetes is being managed and if any changes are needed.

## Checking your own blood sugar levels

Some people need to check their blood sugar levels regularly by doing a finger-prick test using a blood glucose meter. If you do need to, you'll receive a meter and test strips. Your healthcare team will explain how to use them.

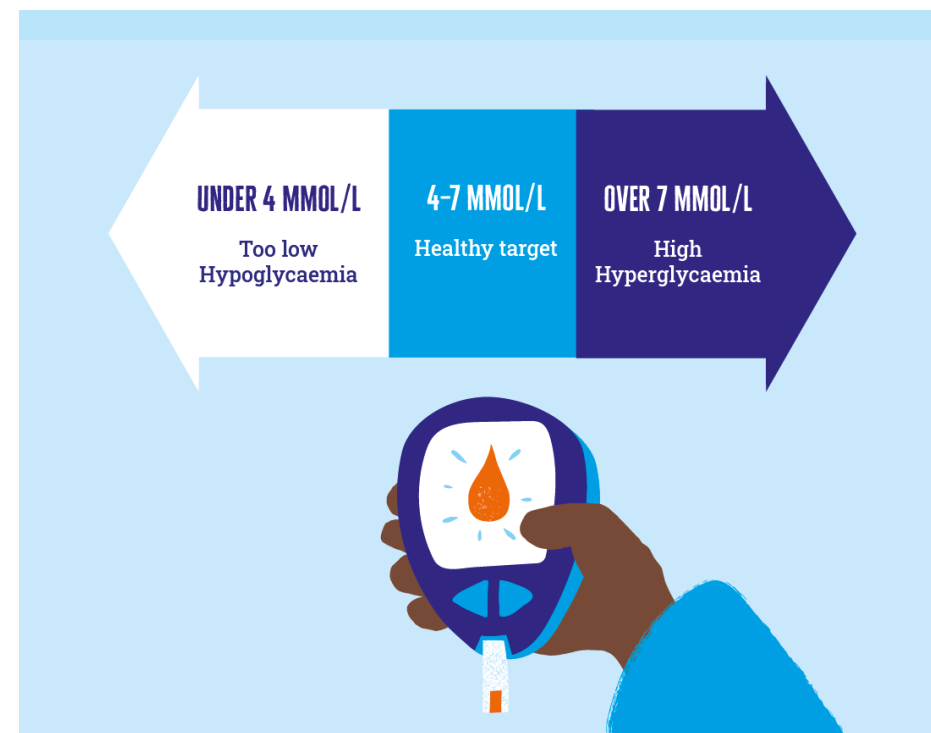
Find out more about checking your blood sugar at [diabetes.org.uk/blood-sugar-testing](https://diabetes.org.uk/blood-sugar-testing)

### What are my blood sugar targets?

Ask your healthcare team what your blood sugar target should be. It's normally between 4-7 mmol/l before meals and less than 8.5mmol/l two hours after meals. Checking blood sugar levels at home is important if you are at risk of low blood sugars, known as hypos.

### Hypos and hypes

Some people can experience complications caused by their blood sugar levels going too low or too high.



A **hypo**, or hypoglycaemia, is when your blood sugar level goes too low. Not everyone with type 2 diabetes has hypos. Certain diabetes medications increase your risk of having a hypo.

Blood sugar levels can drop for reasons like missing a meal, not eating enough carbs for the medication you've taken, exercising more than usual, or drinking alcohol on an empty stomach.

Find out more about preventing and treating hypos at [diabetes.org.uk/t2-hypos](https://diabetes.org.uk/t2-hypos)

A **hyper**, or hyperglycaemia, is when your blood sugar is too high.

This could be for reasons like missing some medication, eating more carbs than usual, feeling stressed, or being unwell.

Learn more about preventing hypes and what to do in the event of a hyper at [diabetes.org.uk/t2-hypers](https://diabetes.org.uk/t2-hypers)

## Looking after your eyes



High blood sugar levels over a long period of time can cause serious damage to parts of your body. This is why it's so important to try and keep your blood sugar levels within your target range and go to your regular health checks.

Diabetic retinopathy is a diabetes complication that affects your eyes. It affects your vision and can lead to blindness if left untreated.

You should get a diabetic eye check at least once every two years to check for any damage to the eyes. Some people may need it more often. This will make sure you get the right treatment in time.

## Looking after your feet



High blood sugar levels over time can damage the sensation in your feet and affect your circulation. This can lead to loss of blood supply to your feet. Without a good blood supply, you might have problems with cuts and sores healing. Foot problems can, in severe cases, lead to toe, foot or leg amputations.

Your healthcare team will examine your feet at least once a year. They'll use special equipment to test for numbness or changes to the feeling in your feet.

Get in the habit of checking your own feet every day for any cuts or changes. Tell your healthcare team if you have any concerns.

## Looking after your kidneys



Diabetic nephropathy is the name for kidney damage caused by diabetes. It develops slowly over a long period of time. High blood sugar levels can damage the small blood vessels and tiny filters in your kidneys. This can cause them to leak and not work as well.

Your blood and urine will be tested at least once a year to see how well your kidneys are working. Some people may need these tests more often.

## Looking after your heart



High blood sugar levels over a long period of time can cause damage to your blood vessels. This can lead to an increased risk of heart attacks and strokes.

You'll have blood pressure and cholesterol checks at least once a year to check for signs of heart problems.

Cholesterol is also known as blood fats. Your healthcare team will tell you if you need to try to bring your cholesterol levels down.

## Managing your weight

If you're living with obesity or overweight, losing weight is one of the most helpful things you can do to manage type 2 diabetes. But you don't have to do it alone and your healthcare team can support you.

Losing weight improves your blood sugar, blood pressure, and cholesterol. It also lowers your risk of diabetes complications. In some cases, it can even help put your diabetes into remission – **page 20**.

### How to lose weight with type 2 diabetes

The main ways that people with type 2 diabetes lose weight are by eating a healthy diet, taking medication, or having weight loss surgery. Speak to your healthcare team for advice on the best approach for you.

There may be NHS weight management services in your area. Ask your GP if you're eligible.

Find more information about losing weight, including diet plans and a downloadable weight loss planner at **[diabetes.org.uk/t2-losing-weight](https://diabetes.org.uk/t2-losing-weight)**

## Getting the right healthcare

Getting the right diabetes checks and tests at the right time helps you and your healthcare team to manage your diabetes and for you to remain healthy.

You should have a diabetes check-up at least once a year at your GP surgery or hospital, but this may involve two or three different appointments in different places, depending on where you live. This is sometimes known as an annual review.

Your annual review should include:

- a **blood test** that checks your HbA1c, cholesterol, and how well your kidneys are working,
- a **urine test** to check for any signs of kidney damage,
- a **blood pressure check**,
- a **measure of your height and weight** to work out your **body mass index (BMI)** to support you to maintain a healthy weight,
- a **foot check** to look for damage or changes to the feeling and nerves in your feet,
- a **diabetic eye check** to look for damage to the back of your eyes. You'll usually have to go to a different appointment for this. Most will only need this once every two years but it may be more often depending on your last result.

Find out more about getting your regular diabetes appointments and checks at **[diabetes.org.uk/diabetes-checks](https://diabetes.org.uk/diabetes-checks)**





I always stress the importance of regular medical check-ups and eye tests. We take our cars for annual MOTs, so why not our bodies?

Tony, lives with type 2 diabetes



We know that sometimes GP services aren't always that accessible. And time with your healthcare team can be limited. If you think you're not getting all these checks, it's really important to chase this up.

Having the right checks will help you reduce your risk of serious diabetes complications and keep you healthy.

If you're struggling to get the right care for any reason at all, speak to our helpline team for advice on **0345 123 2399**.

### Your healthcare team

How diabetes care is managed can vary from one GP surgery to another and it's not the same in all parts of the country.

Knowing which healthcare professional to contact and when can make a big difference to how you manage

your diabetes. You don't have to wait until your booked appointments, it's about knowing what to do between appointments too. You will come across many healthcare professionals who might include:

- GP
- practice nurse
- diabetes specialist nurse (DSN)
- registered dietitian
- registered podiatrist
- ophthalmologist
- eye screener
- pharmacist
- psychologist.



Use this table to make a note of your healthcare team and their details to keep all this information in one place.

Team member	Name and contact details	When do I see them?

### Your healthcare appointments

When you're first diagnosed with type 2 diabetes, you should have certain conversations with your healthcare team. These should include:

- a review of your medical history and anything in your personal life that might affect your diabetes. This may also include a review of any medications you take
- a discussion about your agreed diabetes management plan and how often you should be seen for review. Ensure you know when your next appointment for review is

- a check on your emotional and mental wellbeing
- if appropriate, a discussion about weight loss and type 2 diabetes remission.

### Book your free flu jab

People with diabetes are at increased risk of becoming very unwell from the flu. You should be given a personal care plan telling you what to do if you get ill. It's also really important to get your Covid-19 vaccine when you're invited.



## Medications for type 2 diabetes

When you're first diagnosed with type 2 diabetes, you may not need medication. Changes to your diet – **page 23** – and activity levels – **page 31** – could be all you need.

But at some point, most people with type 2 diabetes will also need to take medication to help manage their blood sugar levels and reduce their risk of complications.

It can take time to find a medicine and dose that's right for you. The most common medicine used for type 2 diabetes is called metformin. But you may need to try a different medicine if metformin doesn't keep your blood sugar levels within your target range, or if you have other health issues like heart or kidney problems.

Some people may need to have injections or tablets that lower their blood sugar levels and help them lose weight. You might need to take insulin if other medicines no longer work well enough to keep your blood sugar levels in your target range.

Find more information about type 2 diabetes medication and insulin at **[diabetes.org.uk/t2-medications](https://diabetes.org.uk/t2-medications)**

### Free prescriptions

Prescriptions are free for everybody in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. You can get your prescription for diabetes medication for free in England as well, but you'll need a medical exemption certificate unless you're 60 or over. For more details, visit **[diabetes.org.uk/t2-free-prescriptions](https://diabetes.org.uk/t2-free-prescriptions)**



## How do I go into type 2 remission?

Weight loss is the most important factor in putting type 2 diabetes into remission. If you're living with obesity or overweight, you're more likely to go into remission if you lose around 15kg, or 2 stone 5lbs, as quickly and safely as possible after your diagnosis. This can take a lot of hard work, but the benefits are so worth it, even if you don't go into remission.

Make sure to ask your GP for advice and support with losing weight in a way that's right for you.

## If you don't live with obesity or overweight

At the moment, most of the evidence we have for type 2 diabetes remission is based on people living with obesity or overweight. There is some research into whether remission is possible for people of a lower weight. But we don't know enough yet to say for sure how people of a healthy weight can safely put their type 2 diabetes into remission.

Speak to your healthcare team about whether trying to put your diabetes into remission is safe for you.  
[diabetes.org.uk/remission](https://diabetes.org.uk/remission)

# REMISSION

**Remission (sometimes called reversal) of type 2 diabetes is possible for some people. This is when your long-term blood sugar levels return to a non-diabetes range without needing to take diabetes medications. This means having an HbA1c of less than 48mmol/mol or 6.5% for three months or more.**

In remission, the symptoms of diabetes and any new damage it can do to your body are on pause. Not everyone will experience the same benefits. The key benefit of remission is less risk of long term complications like heart attacks, strokes, diabetes-related sight loss, and nerve damage that can lead to amputations.

Other potential benefits include:

- taking fewer medications

- lower blood pressure and cholesterol from losing weight
- having more energy and sleeping better.

Remission doesn't mean that your diabetes is gone forever. Blood sugar levels can rise again. But you're likely to feel a lot better and see huge improvements in your long-term health.



“  
It's important to talk about remission; to give hope to people who are working towards this or have perhaps come out of remission. It's also important for people to know that you need to work at it, and that it doesn't come easy.  
”

Snita, lives with type 2 diabetes



## EATING WELL

**Choosing healthy foods and eating well is key for managing type 2 diabetes, even if weight loss isn't your goal. Healthy eating makes it easier to manage your blood sugar levels, blood pressure and cholesterol, and can reduce your risk of complications.**

We've given some helpful tips on the next pages, but there's a lot more information in our booklet, *Eating Well with Diabetes*. You can order this for free on our online shop at [diabetes.org.uk/eating-well-guide](https://diabetes.org.uk/eating-well-guide)

### What does a healthy diet look like?

It's important to understand that there is no one-size-fits-all approach to healthy eating. Different things work for different people, so work with your healthcare team to find out what would be best for you.

You might be wondering what foods you need to avoid. While no foods are off limits if you have type 2 diabetes, it's best to eat less foods high in sugar, salt or saturated fat. Make sure to include a variety of healthy foods in your diet and watch your portion sizes.

### Meal ideas

For healthy ideas, visit our online Recipe Finder at [diabetes.org.uk/recipe-ideas](https://diabetes.org.uk/recipe-ideas)

We have loads of delicious dietitian-approved recipes to make it easy for you to decide what to eat. You can search by dietary requirement, ingredients and type of meal.

We also have meal plans if you would like guidance with what you should be eating. There are plans for different diets like Mediterranean, vegetarian and vegan, and low-calorie options if you're trying to lose weight.

Find our meal plans at [diabetes.org.uk/t2-meal-plans](https://diabetes.org.uk/t2-meal-plans)



Take care of your lifestyle from the start and work at it until it becomes a good habit. That will eventually help you to be in control.

Rohit, lives with type 2 diabetes



## Tips to help you eat well

### Eat more fruit and veg

Fruit and vegetables are full of vitamins, minerals and fibre. Whole fruit is good for everyone, and if you have diabetes it is no different. Fruits do contain sugar, but it's natural sugar and whole fruits contain fibre. Fibre is important because it slows down the rise in blood sugar levels after eating carbs. It also keeps your gut healthy and can reduce your cholesterol. Adding more veg to your plate will also help your meals go further.

### Eat less salt

Too much salt can increase your risk of high blood pressure. Limit intake to no more than 6g (one teaspoon) of salt a day. Most of the salt we eat comes from pre-packaged foods. Check food labels and choose foods that are labelled green or amber for salt. Using herbs and spices to flavour your food instead of salt can help you reduce your salt intake.

### Eat less red and processed meat

Red and processed meats like beef, pork and sausages are linked to increased risk of heart disease and some cancers. Try swapping red and processed meat for:

- poultry eg. chicken or turkey
- fish
- eggs

- pulses eg. beans or lentils
- unsalted nuts and seeds.

### Snack smart

Try to choose unsweetened yoghurts, unsalted nuts, seeds, fruit and vegetables if you want a snack instead of crisps, biscuits and chocolate. And keep an eye on portion sizes.

### Be sensible about alcohol

Alcohol is high in calories, so drinking a lot can make it difficult if you are trying to lose weight. Too much alcohol can also increase your risk of heart disease and certain cancers. Try to stick to no more than 14 units a week and spread it out over three or more days.

If you take insulin, or other diabetes medications that can cause hypos, you're more likely to have a hypo when you drink alcohol. Having a meal or snack containing carbs before or after drinking alcohol can help keep your blood sugar levels stable.

### Don't buy 'diabetic' food



It's against the law for food to be marketed as 'diabetic'. It doesn't have any special health benefits that you can't get from eating healthy foods, and it can have as many calories as similar foods. Most importantly, it can still affect your blood sugar levels, and eating too much can have a laxative effect.



### Choose healthier carbohydrates

Carbohydrates have the biggest effect on your blood sugar levels after eating. But they are still an important part of a healthy, balanced diet. Just be aware of the amount and type you eat. Choose high fibre carbs where you can.

The amount of carbohydrate you eat will affect your blood sugar levels after eating. Speak to your healthcare team if you need to make changes to the amount of carbs you eat, for example if you manage your diabetes with insulin.

Eat less of 	Choose instead 
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ sugar or honey coated breakfast cereals</li> <li>■ fried chips, instant mash</li> <li>■ fried rice</li> <li>■ white pasta</li> <li>■ white bread or rolls.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ wholegrain cereals, like wheat biscuit, unsweetened muesli or porridge</li> <li>■ boiled or baked potatoes with the skins on, or sweet potatoes</li> <li>■ basmati or brown rice</li> <li>■ wholewheat pasta</li> <li>■ chapatti made with wholemeal flour</li> <li>■ wholegrain, granary or seeded bread.</li> </ul>



I recognised that I needed to make a substantial change to my diet, however this needed to be a change that I could also sustain. I've also realised that when I become too relaxed about my diet, my numbers go up again, so I must remain on top of things and in control of my nutrition. This has kept my diabetes in remission.



Mohammed,  
in remission of type 2 diabetes



### Choose healthier fats

Healthy fats from certain oils, unsalted nuts, seeds, avocados and oily fish are good for your heart health. But saturated fats from foods like ghee,

butter, biscuits, and cakes can increase your cholesterol and raise your risk of heart disease. Try to grill, steam or bake food rather than frying to cut down the amount of fat you use in general.

Eat less of 	Choose instead 
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ saturated fats – butter, margarine, lard, ghee</li> <li>■ fried foods</li> <li>■ pies, pastries, sausage rolls</li> <li>■ fatty cuts of meat e.g. Ribeye beef steak, pork belly, lamb shoulder</li> <li>■ creamy sauces and dressings</li> <li>■ crisps, savoury snacks such as Bombay mix.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ unsaturated oils and spreads such as olive oil, sunflower oil, and rapeseed oil</li> <li>■ avocados</li> <li>■ plain unsalted nuts and seeds</li> <li>■ grilled, poached, boiled or baked foods</li> <li>■ lean cuts of meat and fish</li> <li>■ unsweetened milk and yoghurt.</li> </ul>

## Cut down on free sugars

It's a myth that eating too much sugar causes type 2 diabetes. But cutting down on free sugars will help you manage your blood sugar levels and your weight. It will also help reduce your risk of health conditions like heart disease.

Free sugars are sugars added to food and drink by food manufacturers, or by us at home. This includes sugars in honey, syrups, smoothies and unsweetened fruit juice.

It's difficult to cut out sugar completely. Small, practical swaps are a good starting point to help reduce the overall sweetness of your diet.



Examples of free sugars	Choose instead ✓
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ sugar in tea and coffee</li><li>■ squash with added sugar, fizzy or energy drinks</li><li>■ sweets, chocolate and biscuits</li><li>■ cereals or cereal bars high in sugar</li><li>■ sweet puddings like jelly, crumble, cake, tinned fruit in syrup</li><li>■ marmalade, jam, honey, syrup.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ artificial sweeteners like Canderel, Sweetex, Hermesetas, Splenda</li><li>■ water infused with fruit or herbs for flavour, diet fizzy drinks and sugar-free squash</li><li>■ plain digestive biscuit, oatcakes or crackers</li><li>■ low sugar cereals</li><li>■ fresh fruit, frozen fruit with natural yoghurt, tinned fruit in juice, sugar-free jelly.</li></ul>

If you sometimes have hypos and need to treat them with sweets or sugary drinks, don't stop doing that. But talk to your diabetes team if it happens a lot, as you might need your medication adjusted.

“

**Before my diagnosis I ate lots of processed meats, fast food, sugary drinks and sweets. My current food habits are a great help in managing type 2 diabetes and they're better for me. I even have room for the occasional sweet treat.**

Skids, lives with type 2 diabetes

”





# MOVING MORE

Along with eating well, exercise is an essential way to manage your type 2 diabetes.

There are many benefits of moving more, which can include:

- helping your body use insulin better
- improving your cholesterol
- helping you maintain a healthy weight and keep weight off after you've lost it
- more energy and better sleep
- lower stress levels
- improved HbA1c levels.

## Tips for getting active

### Start small

Don't be intimidated by exercise. All you need to do at the beginning is more than you were doing before. Every little bit really helps. Why not play some sport in the garden, do a gentle online exercise class, or go for a swim? Even doing gardening or chores around the house can add to your activity levels.

If you have health conditions or difficulties with mobility that affect how much activity you can do, talk to your GP or healthcare team. They can give you advice about finding ways to move your body that fit in with your life.

### Walk more

If walking is an option for you, it's a free and effective way to get fitter. Enjoy a walk in a local park, get off the bus a stop early, or leave the car at home for small trips. Use an app on your phone or a wearable step counter to see how much you walk each day. 10,000 steps a day is a good goal, but you'll see benefits from small improvements.

### Get fit with friends

Instead of meeting friends for coffee, go for a walk, visit the shops, play a sport or hit the dance floor. The key is finding ways of moving your body that you enjoy and can fit easily around your life.

### How much exercise to aim for

Aim to be physically active every day. Try to do activities that improve muscle strength on two or more days a week. For example, heavy gardening, carrying food shopping or yoga. You should aim to spend less time sitting down, and more time on your feet, if you can.

For more ideas and tips on exercising with type 2 diabetes, visit [diabetes.org.uk/t2-moving-more](https://diabetes.org.uk/t2-moving-more)





I realised I needed to do some form of exercise but wasn't keen on the gym. I took up running, which was not an activity I had done before, but came to enjoy it and would run up to three times a week. I also downloaded the Couch to 5k app. It took a couple of months with the running, but I found my groove and got into a routine.

Paul, lives with type 2 diabetes



# LEARNING MORE

**While your healthcare team should be your first contact for any questions or concerns, there are other places you can go to learn more and gain confidence in managing your diabetes.**

## Group education courses

A group education course will help you learn about managing your diabetes. You should be offered one in your area when you're first diagnosed. There may be a waiting list for some courses.

People who go on these courses often report that they feel more confident managing their diabetes, making healthy food choices, looking after themselves and meeting other people with diabetes. Examples include:

- DESMOND, which stands for Diabetes Education and Self-Management for Ongoing and Newly Diagnosed. Find out more at [mydesmond.com](http://mydesmond.com)
- X-PERT, which consists of six weekly sessions.

There may be other courses in your local area, so make sure to check with your healthcare team. If there aren't any near you, please contact our helpline for advice.

## Learning Zone

Our online Learning Zone can help you manage your diabetes with

confidence. It provides free videos, quizzes and interactive tools based on clinically trusted advice, tailored to you and based on real experiences. Visit [learningzone.diabetes.org.uk](http://learningzone.diabetes.org.uk) for more information.

## Our website

You probably have questions about how type 2 diabetes fits into your daily life. Our website has loads of information about what you might need to consider when it comes to the cost of living, travel, work, illness, driving, sex and relationships, and more. Visit [diabetes.org.uk/life-with-t2](http://diabetes.org.uk/life-with-t2) for advice on how to manage all of this.



**It's very important to educate yourself about type 2 diabetes and how to deal with it. Knowing that diabetes is a condition that can be managed is so vital.**

Rohit, lives with type 2 diabetes



# Notes

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# SUPPORT AND SERVICES IN ENGLAND

We offer local advice, support groups, volunteering opportunities and events across the country.

## In your area

Find the latest news and information about what's on offer in your area on our website. You can also get in touch with our regional teams with any questions about local services.

### Midlands and East of England

Visit [diabetes.org.uk/midlands-and-east](http://diabetes.org.uk/midlands-and-east)  
Call 01902 916444  
Email [midlands@diabetes.org.uk](mailto:midlands@diabetes.org.uk) or [eastern@diabetes.org.uk](mailto:eastern@diabetes.org.uk)

### North of England

Visit [diabetes.org.uk/north-england](http://diabetes.org.uk/north-england)  
Call 01925 653281  
Email [north@diabetes.org.uk](mailto:north@diabetes.org.uk)

### South East Coast and London

Visit [diabetes.org.uk/se-london](http://diabetes.org.uk/se-london)  
Call 01372 720148  
Email [secoastandlondon@diabetes.org.uk](mailto:secoastandlondon@diabetes.org.uk)

### South West and South Central England

Visit [diabetes.org.uk/south-west-central](http://diabetes.org.uk/south-west-central)  
Call 01823 448260  
Email [southwest.southcentral@diabetes.org.uk](mailto:southwest.southcentral@diabetes.org.uk)

## NHS England services

### Digital Weight Management Programme

This programme supports adults living with obesity and type 2 diabetes to manage their weight and improve their health. Learn more at [england.nhs.uk/digital-weight-management](http://england.nhs.uk/digital-weight-management)

### Healthy Living for people with type 2 diabetes

A free, online service with information about managing type 2 diabetes, including advice on eating well, being more active, and other NHS services and support. Sign up at [healthyliving.nhs.uk](http://healthyliving.nhs.uk)

### Type 2 Diabetes Path to Remission Programme

A low calorie, diet replacement treatment that has helped almost half of participants to put their type 2 diabetes into remission. Find out more at [england.nhs.uk/diabetes/treatment-care/diabetes-remission](http://england.nhs.uk/diabetes/treatment-care/diabetes-remission)

# MISSION

**We are Diabetes UK  
and it's our mission to  
tackle diabetes, day in  
and day out, until it can  
do no harm.**

It's why we campaign for better care,  
support you in times of need and fund  
ground-breaking research into new  
treatments and a cure.

Diabetes doesn't stop, so neither do we.

We welcome your feedback. If any information in this guide has been particularly helpful or if you would like to suggest any improvements, please send your comments to: [helpline@diabetes.org.uk](mailto:helpline@diabetes.org.uk) or write to us at: Diabetes UK Helpline, Wells Lawrence House, 126 Back Church Lane, London E1 1FH