



# Insulin Dependent Diabetes Trust

## Type 2 and You

Issue 8 - July 2011



Welcome to the eighth issue of Type 2 and You. In this issue we look at some ways for getting the most out of your health care team and with the holiday season upon us we look at some tips to remember if you are going away.

## Getting the most from your Health Care Professional

Health Care Professionals (HCPs) come in many forms and people with Type 2 diabetes will come into contact with several of them at some time or another. Examples include GPs, Practice Nurses, Dieticians, Diabetes Specialist Nurses (DSNs), Podiatrists and a range of Hospital Consultants.

Sadly, it is often the case that people come away from appointments feeling confused about their treatment or feeling that they have not got what they wanted. The aim of this article is to give you some knowledge to enable you to get the most out of any appointment that you may have with a member of your diabetes health care team. It gives you some tips as to how to manage the actual appointment or

consultation effectively, your rights as a patient, the standards of care you should expect and what to do if things go wrong.

### Some tips for your appointment

- Be prepared. Make a list of what you want to get out of the consultation and questions you want to ask.
- Be informed. Do your research before you go so that you are aware about things like the various treatment options that may be available.
- Be honest with your HCP. If you are honest with them about your diabetes or related condition then you will be able to be treated more effectively.
- Make sure your HCP knows why you have come and that they fully understand the nature of the problem.
- Have mutual respect. Respect is a two way thing, you should respect your HCP for their medical knowledge but they should also respect you for your experiences as the patient.
- Make joint decisions. Having mutual respect will allow you both to make decisions that you are both happy with.

### Know your rights

A key element in getting the most out of an appointment is to know your rights. You should know what standards of care you are entitled to, what to do if you feel you are not getting them and the support on offer to you if this is the case.

The National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) is an independent organisation responsible for providing national guidance on promoting good health and preventing and treating ill health. It has recently issued a set of quality standards for adults with diabetes. These quality standards lay down what level of care you should receive in relation to the management of your diabetes.

They are:

1. A structured education programme (such as DESMOND), annual review and ongoing education.
2. Personalised advice on nutrition and physical activity from a

suitably trained healthcare provider.

3. Participation in annual care planning to agree goals and an action plan.
4. Agreement with your health professional of your target HbA1c and an ongoing review to minimise hypoglycaemia.
5. Agreement with your health professional to start, review and stop medications to lower blood glucose, blood pressure and cholesterol.
6. Trained health professionals to start and manage treatment with insulin as part of a structured education programme which includes learning dose adjustment.
7. Women of childbearing age should be regularly informed about the importance of preconception blood glucose levels and any risks, including medication, to the unborn child. If a pregnancy is planned, preconception care should be offered and if not, they should be offered contraceptive advice.
8. An annual assessment for complications and their management.
9. An assessment for psychological problems which, if present, should be appropriately managed.
10. People with, or at risk of, foot ulceration should receive regular reviews by a foot protection team. Those with a foot problem requiring urgent attention should be referred to a foot care team within 24 hours.
11. If admitted to hospital your care should be managed by appropriately trained staff. You should have access to a specialist diabetes team and given the choice of self-monitoring and managing your own insulin.
12. If you are admitted to hospital with ketoacidosis, you should receive educational and psychological support before being discharged and followed up by a specialist diabetes team.
13. If you have experienced hypoglycaemia which required medical attention, then you should be referred to a specialist diabetes team.

The full details can be found at:

<http://www.nice.org.uk/aboutnice/qualitystandards/qualitystandards.jsp>

**Remember this is the care that you should receive. This is part of the government's promises to make sure that the standards of care are high quality.**

If you are not receiving this standard of care, then you need to say so. You have a right to complain and this is laid down as a legal right in the NHS Constitution. The Constitution brings together in one place the details of what staff, patients and the public can expect from the NHS. It sets out your rights and responsibilities as an NHS patient including your right to complain if things go wrong. There can be subtle ways of doing this, such as asking when you are going to receive the education programme that you should have (and don't be afraid to mention NICE Quality Standards) or the slightly less subtle ways, such as writing to your GP practice manager.

Here's what to do if you wish to make a complaint about an NHS organisation, such as your surgery:

- You should first contact them directly.
- If you are not sure how to make a complaint about an NHS organisation or employee, the Patient Advice and Liaison Service [PALS] can help you. Its role is to make sure your concerns reach the right people and to support you in resolving any problems you may have. There are PALS offices in most general hospitals. To find your local PALS office contact your general hospital or visit the website: [www.pals.nhs.uk](http://www.pals.nhs.uk)
- You can also raise your concerns by getting in touch with regulatory bodies, such as the Care Quality Commission: Telephone 03000 616161 or on the web at [www.cqc.org.uk](http://www.cqc.org.uk)
- If you have tried the NHS complaints procedure but are dissatisfied with the response, you can contact the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman. The Ombudsman carries out independent investigations into complaints about the NHS and can be contacted on the Complaints Helpline: 0345 015 4033, open Monday to Friday 8.30 am to 5.30pm or e-mail [phso.enquiries@ombudsman.org.uk](mailto:phso.enquiries@ombudsman.org.uk) or you can write to: The Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman  
• Millbank Tower, Millbank, London SW1P 4QP.

## **Changes to Reporting of HbA1c Postponed**

In the April issue of Type 2 and You we wrote about the changes to the way HbA1c results are going to be reported. These changes were due to take place from 1st June. This date has been changed to 1st October. The delay in the changeover was called for by clinicians and biochemists from the International Federation of Clinical Chemistry (IFCC), who were worried that the new measurement numbers were not being used widely enough and were not yet understood by people with diabetes.

If you are still confused about the changes to the reporting measures then contact us using the details at the end of this newsletter. If you have internet access, the original article and the conversion table can be viewed on our website.

Just go to:

<http://www.iddt.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/04/Type2andYou-Apr2011.pdf>

---

## **Things You Don't Need For Your Feet!**

People with diabetes are commonly told to take good care of their feet and without a doubt this is very good advice. However, there are an ever increasing number of companies telling you what you need to do and what you need to buy. In this article we have a look at the things you don't need to do and the things you don't need to buy in order to take good care of your feet.

**Diabetic Shoes** – Just because you have diabetes does not mean that you necessarily need "diabetic shoes", the sort sold in pharmacies or by mail order companies. What you do need is a pair of good fitting, protective shoes, trainers are ideal. If you do need a pair of special shoes then your podiatrist will be able to advise you.

**Diabetic Socks** – If you don't have peripheral neuropathy then it is most likely you don't need diabetic socks. However, you should choose socks that fit comfortably, not tightly and that are made without seams that could dig into your feet.

**Foot Moisturizer** - Sometimes what is sold as foot moisturiser is actually just ordinary moisturiser but with a higher price tag, so check the ingredients list before you buy. If you are unsure about what product to use, ask your GP, pharmacist or podiatrist.

**Over-the-Counter Foot Medications** – Many of these can be dangerous for your feet. You should only use medication for your feet that has been prescribed by a health care professional.

**Foot Soaking Products** – People with diabetes are advised not to soak their feet. Therefore, you do not need things like foot baths and foot spas.

**Electric Blankets, Hot Water Bottles, Heat pads** – Any of these items can burn your skin and you are at particular risk if you have lost some sensation in your feet. It is much better and safer to wear socks with a thermal or sheepskin lining.

**Pedicures** – No-one other than your health care provider should be using anything sharp on your feet and that includes nail clippers and scissors. However, you can still sit back and have your toenails painted if you want, so relax and enjoy!

### **Precautions when travelling by air**

- Carry two lots of medication, testing equipment and syringes/pens and distribute them between two different lots of hand luggage. Luggage does get lost.
- You should always carry a card to say that you have diabetes. If you use insulin, you will need a letter from your GP to explain that you have to carry insulin and other diabetes equipment on board with you.
- Always take more medication than you need in case of loss or breakages. It is also a good idea to take an extra prescription with you, just in case.

### **Holiday Insurance**

If you have diabetes, travel agents are not the best people to provide holiday insurance. Shop around, but always declare your diabetes and any other medical conditions, otherwise you may not be covered if you need to use the insurance. If you are going on holiday in Europe, remember to take your European Health Insurance card (EHIC) and proof of being a UK resident eg driving licence. The EHIC is available at the Post Office.

### **Coping with diabetes and the heat of summer**

Drink plenty of water as dehydration can raise blood glucose levels. Sunburn can raise blood glucose levels, so avoid spending long hours in the sun and wear sunscreen of at least 30 SPF.

Shield your meter from the sun and test strips should be kept in a cool, dry place.

Hot weather may affect blood glucose levels and can lead to low blood sugars.

IDDT has produced a FREE Holiday Information Pack. If you would like one, then please contact us using the details at the end of this news letter.

## **Holiday Tips**

If you are going on holiday this summer, it may be the first time you have travelled since your diabetes was diagnosed. We hope that this article will give you a few practical tips whether going on holiday abroad or in this country.

## IDDT Quarterly Publications

IDDT produce a wide range of **free** information leaflets, including information on Carbohydrates, Hypoglycaemia, Diet and Exercise and Exercise and your Heart. These can be sent by post or downloaded from our new website.

For more information contact us!

**Insulin Dependent Diabetes Trust**

PO Box 294, Northampton, NN1 4XS  
Telephone: 01604 622837

E-mail: [enquiries@iddtinternational.org](mailto:enquiries@iddtinternational.org)

Or visit our new website:  
[www.iddtinternational.org](http://www.iddtinternational.org)

**Insulin Dependent Diabetes Trust**  
PO Box 294  
Northampton  
NN1 4XS

tel: 01604 622837  
fax: 01604 622838  
e-mail: [enquiries@iddtinternational.org](mailto:enquiries@iddtinternational.org)  
website: [www.iddtinternational.org](http://www.iddtinternational.org)