



# Insulin Dependent Diabetes Trust

Type 2 and You

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Welcome to the eleventh issue of Type 2 and You. In this issue we report back on the support that IDDD has given to developing countries over the last 12 months, as well as announcing the date for our 2012 Annual Conference. We also take a look at cholesterol – what it is, what it does and how to manage it.

## Insulin for Life

Last year IDDD continued to work with an international organization called Insulin for Life, to collect unwanted, unused and in-date insulin and diabetes supplies and to distribute these to clinics in developing countries. We also continued to co-ordinate our Sponsor a Child Scheme. This scheme allows people to sponsor a child that is cared for by the Dream Trust Hospital in India, By making a regular monthly donations sponsors can support the hospital to purchase the insulin and diabetes supplies that are so desperately needed just to stay alive.

In 2011 we managed to collect and distribute over 8,000 pens, cartridges and vials of insulin and send them to those who need them. All this insulin came to a value of over £25,000 and without

organizations like Insulin for Life, it would simply have gone to waste. Similarly the support for the Dream Trust has gone from strength to strength with over 75 sponsors supporting 28 children to provide the £17 a month needed by each child to buy life-saving insulin. For more information about how we help developing countries visit:

<http://www.iddt.org/here-to-help/helping-developing-countries/>

or contact us using the details on this newsletter.



Some of the Children from the Dream Trust Hospital celebrating World Diabetes Day in November last year.

How **You** can help:

There are three ways in which you can help.

- Perhaps you have recently changed your insulin or equipment and now have supplies that you no longer need – then send them direct to us and we will ensure that they are sent to those that need them.
- Ask for one of our “Look in Your Fridge” posters to give to your doctor and/or nurse and ask them to send us any unwanted insulin

that they have.

- Consider sponsoring one of the many children whose diabetes is cared for by the Dream Trust in India. It costs as little as £2 a month to sponsor a child. For more information on the Dream Trust visit [www.dreamtrust.org](http://www.dreamtrust.org) or contact IDDT for more information.

## A Date for Your Diary

It may seem like a long way off but we thought we would take this opportunity to let you know about IDDT’s 2012 Annual Conference. Once again we will be holding the Conference at the Kettering Park Hotel and the venue has been booked for Saturday 13th October.

As usual there will be talks from a range of speakers on a variety of subjects that will be of interest to people living with diabetes, as well as both formal and informal opportunities to meet other people who live with the condition and to share knowledge and experiences.

We had some really positive feedback after last years’ event, so we hope that you will be able to come along and make this years’ event even more of a success.

## Cholesterol

There is increasing pressure on all of us these days to have our cholesterol levels checked and to take action if they are found to be too high. But what exactly is cholesterol? What does it do? What is “too” high and what can we do to prevent or reduce a high cholesterol level? This article aims to give the answers to these questions as well as some practical advice about managing cholesterol levels.

## What is Cholesterol?

Cholesterol is a fatty substance produced naturally by the body, primarily by the liver. However, some foods also contain cholesterol. Cholesterol has several functions essential to the normal functioning of the body, including being an important building block for cell walls as well as functioning in the production of steroid hormones and vitamin D.

Cholesterol is carried around the body in the bloodstream by combining with proteins. These cholesterol/protein combinations are called lipoproteins. There are two different types of lipoproteins and these are often referred to as “good” and “bad” cholesterol..

- High-density lipoprotein (HDL): HDL carries cholesterol away from the cell and back to the liver, where it is broken down and passed out of the body as a waste product. It is referred to as “good cholesterol” and higher levels are better.
- Low-density lipoprotein (LDL): LDL carries cholesterol from your liver to the cells that need it. If there is too much cholesterol for the cells to use it can build up in the artery walls. For this reason it is referred to as “bad cholesterol” and lower levels are better.

While having high levels of bad cholesterol does not in itself cause any symptoms, it increases the risk of other health conditions, including narrowing of the arteries, heart attack and stroke. People with diabetes are already pre-disposed to these conditions so it is especially important that they get their cholesterol levels checked and take action if needed.

## What causes high cholesterol?

Lots of different factors or combinations of factors can contribute to having high levels of bad cholesterol, including lifestyle, family history and ethnic group.

Lifestyle factors such as an unhealthy diet, being overweight, smoking and lack of exercise can all contribute to having high levels of bad cholesterol.

Having diabetes itself increases the risk of having high cholesterol levels, as do other conditions including high blood pressure, kidney disease, liver disease and underactive thyroid. Treating these underlying conditions can help to reduce cholesterol levels.

There are also several “fixed” factors that can contribute to having high cholesterol and unfortunately these cannot be changed. These include having a family history of early heart disease, stroke or cholesterol related conditions. Age is a factor; the older you are the more likely you are to have narrowing of the arteries due to high cholesterol levels. Ethnicity also plays a part and people of Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi or Sri Lankan descent have an increased risk of high blood cholesterol. There is also a genetic condition, called familial hypercholesterolaemia, which causes high blood cholesterol. About 1 in 500 people inherit the condition from a parent.

## How is high cholesterol diagnosed?

Cholesterol levels are checked using a simple blood test, either using a needle and syringe or a finger prick test. You may be asked to fast for 10 to 12 hours before the test (usually overnight). The test is usually carried out by your GP or Practice Nurse but some Pharmacies offer a testing service or sell self-test kits.

The Government recommends that healthy people should not have a total cholesterol level of more than 5mmol/L with LDL levels of not more than 3mmol/L. At present the UK average levels are 5.5mmol/L and 5.6mmol/L in men and women respectively.

Adults at high risk are defined as those with existing **heart disease**, **high blood pressure** (hypertension), **diabetes** or those with a family history of early heart disease. Those at high risk should have a total cholesterol level of 4mmol/L or less, with levels of LDL being 2mmol/L or less.

## How is high cholesterol treated?

Your state of general health, associated risk factors and cholesterol levels will determine what steps your health professionals will advise

you to take to reduce your cholesterol levels. The first things most people will be advised to do is to make some lifestyle changes, eating a more healthy diet, stopping smoking and taking more exercise. The key to eating a diet that will help you to reduce your bad cholesterol levels is to try and avoid foods that are high in saturated fats, such as fatty cuts of meat, dairy products, cakes, biscuits and chocolate. The Food Standards Agency recommends that the average man consumes no more than 30g of saturated fat per day. This figure is reduced to 20g for women. The amount of saturated fat in any food product will be given on the nutritional information label, so remember to check those labels!

If your cholesterol levels have not dropped after a few months then you may be advised to start taking medication to lower your cholesterol. The most commonly prescribed cholesterol reducing medications come from a group of drugs called statins, which work by blocking the enzyme in the liver that is used to make cholesterol. Some people can suffer side effects from taking statins and these include muscle pain and stomach problems. If you do suffer from side effects, then there are alternatives and your doctor will discuss these with you.

### **Prevention**

The rules for preventing high cholesterol levels are pretty much the same as those for reducing cholesterol levels. You should try to avoid foods that have a high saturated fat content as these will increase your levels of bad cholesterol, whereas eating foods that contain even a small amount of unsaturated fat will have the effect of raising your good cholesterol levels.

Cigarette smoke contains a chemical that prevents the bad cholesterol from being transported back to the liver, so smoking should be avoided. It is also recommended that you take 150 minutes exercise a week. This does not need to be high intensity exercise but can simply be going for a brisk walk. Exercise stimulates your body to transport bad cholesterol back to the liver, where it is broken down, thus preventing high levels developing.

## **Leaving a Legacy**

Leaving a gift to IDDT in your Will is one way to make a real difference to the lives of people living with diabetes. Although it is a very sensitive subject we are taking this opportunity to send you a copy of our leaflet "Your Reasons for Making a Will".

The leaflet explains about the various ways you can leave a gift to IDDT and how vital this type of legacy giving is to ensuring that we can go on helping and supporting thousands of people who live with diabetes.

So, if you are thinking about making or updating your Will, we hope you will consider leaving a gift to IDDT and that you find the leaflet useful.



## 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!

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