



# **DIABETES HEALTH CARE LEAFLET**

## **Introduction**

Diabetes is a lifelong condition that causes a person's blood sugar level to become too high.

There are two main types of diabetes – type 1 and type 2.

## **Symptoms of Diabetes**

The main symptoms of diabetes are:

- Feeling very thirsty
- Urinating more frequently than usual, particularly at night
- Feeling very tired
- Weight loss and loss of muscle bulk
- Itching around the penis or vagina, or frequent episodes of thrush
- Cuts or wounds that heal slowly
- Blurred vision (caused by the lens of the eye becoming dry)

Type 1 diabetes can develop quickly over weeks or even days.

Many people have type 2 diabetes for years without realising because the early symptoms tend to be general.

## **What Causes Diabetes?**

The amount of sugar in the blood is controlled by a hormone called insulin, which is produced by the pancreas. When food is digested and enters your bloodstream, insulin moves glucose out of the blood and into cells, where it's broken down to produce energy.

However, if you have diabetes, your body is unable to break down glucose into energy. This is because there's either not enough insulin to move the glucose, or the insulin produced doesn't work properly.

## **Type 1 Diabetes**

In type 1 diabetes, the body's immune system attacks and destroys the cells that produce insulin. As no insulin is produced, your glucose levels increase, which can seriously damage the body's organs.

If you're diagnosed with type 1 diabetes, you'll need insulin injections for the rest of your life. You'll also need to pay close attention to certain aspects of your lifestyle and health to ensure your blood glucose levels stay balanced. For example, you'll need to eat healthily, take regular exercise and carry out regular blood tests.

## **Type 2 Diabetes**

Type 2 diabetes is where the body doesn't produce enough insulin, or the body's cells don't react to insulin. This is known as insulin resistance.

If you're diagnosed with type 2 diabetes, you may be able to control your symptoms simply by eating a healthy diet, exercising regularly, and monitoring your blood glucose levels. However, as type 2 is a progressive condition you may eventually need medication, usually in the form of tablets.

## **Caring For Someone With Diabetes**

If someone has diabetes they are usually in good control of their condition. The best thing to do is to ask the student what type of diabetes they have and how they control it. If they take medication make sure you know where their supply is, and make sure you have something sugary to hand in case their glucose levels get low.

