



HealthNex Health Education Leaflet

Understanding & Managing Diabetes

What is Diabetes?

Diabetes is a long-term condition where the body either:

- Does not produce enough insulin, or
- Cannot use insulin effectively.

This leads to high blood sugar (glucose) levels, which can damage blood vessels, nerves, kidneys, eyes, and the heart.

Types of Diabetes

- ✓ **Type 1:** The body cannot make insulin (usually starts in childhood).
- ✓ **Type 2:** The body does not use insulin properly (common in adults, linked to lifestyle).
- ✓ **Gestational Diabetes:** Develops during pregnancy, may disappear after birth but increases future diabetes risk.

Why is Diabetes Serious?

Uncontrolled diabetes can cause:

- ✓ Heart disease & stroke
- ✓ Kidney disease
- ✓ Eye damage (retinopathy, blindness)
- ✓ Nerve damage (neuropathy)
- ✓ Foot ulcers & amputations

Risk Factors

You may be at higher risk if you:

- ✓ Have family history
- ✓ Are overweight/obese
- ✓ Eat unhealthy diet (high sugar/fat, low fibre)
- ✓ Lead a sedentary lifestyle
- ✓ Have high blood pressure or cholesterol
- ✓ Are older
- ✓ Belong to high-risk ethnic groups (South Asian, African, Caribbean, Middle Eastern)

Signs & Symptoms

- ✓ Increased thirst & frequent urination
- ✓ Extreme tiredness
- ✓ Unexplained weight loss
- ✓ Blurred vision
- ✓ Slow healing of cuts/wounds
- ✓ Numbness/tingling in hands or feet

How to Manage & Prevent Diabetes

- Eat a balanced diet (low sugar/fat, high fibre, fruits & vegetables)
- Exercise regularly (150 min/week)
- Maintain healthy weight
- Avoid smoking & limit alcohol

- Monitor blood sugar, blood pressure & cholesterol
- Regular GP check-ups
- Take medicines or insulin as prescribed

When to Seek Urgent Help

Call **999** or go to A&E; if you have:

- Severe weakness/confusion
- Difficulty breathing
- Severe stomach pain
- Loss of consciousness

HealthNex – Supporting Your Health

At **HealthNex**, we provide **mobile health screening** to help you check and manage your blood sugar, blood pressure, cholesterol, and overall health.

- 07353 761061
- www.healthnex.co.uk
- ✉ ■ info@healthnex.co.uk