

A photograph of a middle-aged man with a beard and a woman in blue scrubs in a hospital setting. The woman is holding a tablet that displays a medical chart with a red circle and blue lines. The man is looking at the tablet with a concerned expression.

AT RISK OF DIABETES

➤ WHY IS THIS LEAFLET FOR YOU?

If you have been diagnosed as being at risk of diabetes, this leaflet is for you. It includes information on:

- The risk factors for developing type 2 diabetes
- How you are tested to confirm a diagnosis of being “at risk” or having type 2 diabetes
- What you can do to delay the onset of type 2 diabetes using lifestyle changes

> INTRODUCTION

There are more than 5 million people in the UK who live with diabetes and 90% of these will have type 2 diabetes. It is estimated that over 6 million people are at risk of developing type 2 diabetes but there are steps that can be taken to reduce this risk.



> RISK FACTORS FOR DEVELOPING TYPE 2 DIABETES

You are likely to develop diabetes if:

If you **smoke**

If you are **overweight or obese**, however not all people who develop diabetes are overweight

You are **Asian**. People with origins from the Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Chinese, Black African and Black Caribbean ethnicities are twice to four times more likely to have diabetes than White populations. Diabetes can develop at a much lower weight than in these individuals.

1



You have a **family member** with the condition

2



If you **smoke**

3



You are an **older person** although type 2 diabetes is becoming more common in younger people

4



If you are **overweight or obese**, however not all people who develop diabetes are overweight

5



If you had **gestational diabetes** - Having gestational diabetes is often a warning sign that you can develop type 2 diabetes in the future and that lifestyle changes need to be made once the baby is born.

6



You are **Asian**. People with origins from the Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Chinese, Black African and Black Caribbean ethnicities are twice to four times more likely to have diabetes than White populations. Diabetes can develop at a much lower weight than in these individuals.

7



If you have had previous **heart attack or stroke**



2



3

> HOW TO TEST FOR BEING AT RISK OF DIABETES

An HbA1c blood test measures the amount of glucose attached to red cells. In people who are at risk of diabetes the result will be between 42-47 mmol/mol. In people with diabetes the results will be 48 mmol/mol or more. When diabetes is suspected if you have no symptoms, two separate tests need to be taken with at least 2 weeks in-between. You do not need to fast for the HbA1c test.

➤ WHAT YOU CAN DO TO DELAY OR PREVENT TYPE 2 DIABETES USING LIFESTYLE CHANGES

The onset of type 2 diabetes can sometimes be delayed or prevented, because your body is still making the hormone insulin. It is insulin which helps manage glucose levels.

Eat a healthy diet

Lose weight if you are overweight or obese. If you are of White ethnicity; ideally your body mass index should be around 25. If you are Asian or Black Caribbean it should be around 18. You can identify your BMI by accessing the NHS BMI calculator - www.nhs.uk/health-assessment-tools/calculate-your-body-mass-index/calculate-bmi-for-adults. Some people prefer to use waist measurement as a guide:

- ✓ In women a healthy waist is less than 80 cm (31.5 inches)
- ✓ In men a healthy waist size in men is 94 cm (37 inches)
- ✓ For South Asian men, it's less than 90 cm (35 inches).

Choosing appropriate foods

- ✓ Increase your intake of fruit and veg and in particular, apples, grapes, berries and green leafy vegetables.
- ✓ Choose unsweetened yogurt and cheese - Reduce the amount of sugar rich foods and drinks. Swap full sugar fizzy and energy drinks with diet, or zero sugar brands.

Avoid low fibre carbohydrates such as white bread and rice. Increase your intake of high fibre foods including those with wholegrains such as brown rice, wholewheat pasta, wholemeal flour, wholegrain bread and oats.

Reduce your intake of red and processed meat. Meats like bacon, ham, sausages, pork, beef and lamb are associated with an increased risk of type 2 diabetes. They also increase the risk of heart attacks, stroke and some cancers.

Other foods you can use instead are:

- ✓ Chicken and turkey
- ✓ Very low-calorie diets under health care professional supervision
- ✓ Fish is really good for you; oily fish such as salmon and mackerel are rich in omega-3 oil which helps protect your heart. Try to have at least one portion of oily fish each week and one portion of white fish
- ✓ Unsalted nuts.
- ✓ Eggs
- ✓ Pulses such as beans and lentils

Reduce or limit your alcohol intake of 14 units per week – it is not good to “binge drink”; it is better that alcohol is consumed over a few days rather than on a single day.



➤ INCREASE ACTIVITY AND EXERCISE.

The government recommends that adults should be active at moderate intensity for at least 150 minutes per week. You may find it easier to break this down to 30 minutes, five days a week. Exercise can help in two ways:

- ✓ It helps with insulin sensitivity so your insulin will work more effectively
- ✓ It helps your muscles take in more glucose

Taking more exercise doesn't necessarily mean going to the gym, there are other ways to include more exercise into your everyday lifestyle such as:

- 🚶 Walking more
- 🚶 Take the stairs not the escalator or lift
- 🚶 Get off the bus one stop earlier

Try to do more activities that will increase your muscle strength including:

- ✓ Carrying shopping
- ✓ Gardening
- ✓ Sport or exercise classes such as aquafit, pilates and yoga

Diabetes UK provides resources and tools to help you plan your exercise www.diabetes.org.uk/diabetes-the-basics/types-of-diabetes/type-2/move-more

Prescription for health

For some individuals, making lifestyle changes such as healthy eating, regular exercise, and weight loss can significantly impact diabetes prevention. Prescription for health offers support and access to specialised weight loss programs. To learn more, speak with your practice nurse.



> DIABETES PREVENTION PROGRAMME:

The Healthier You NHS Diabetes Prevention Programme, identifies people at risk of developing type 2 diabetes and refers them onto a nine-month, evidence-based lifestyle change programme.

The Healthier You programme is available both as a face-to-face group service and as a digital service. When referred into the programme, people are free to choose between the two:

- [i england.ndpp@nhs.net](mailto:england.ndpp@nhs.net)
- [i www.england.nhs.uk/diabetes/diabetes-prevention/](http://www.england.nhs.uk/diabetes/diabetes-prevention/)



> USEFUL RESOURCES:

Trend Diabetes website: www.trenddiabetes.online

Diabetes UK: www.diabetes.org.uk

Diabetes UK: ☎ 0345 123 2399



™ Trend Diabetes Limited. Content to be reviewed August 2026