



# Diabetes and tablets

**Novo Nordisk**  
DIABETES SERVICES

INFORMATION ABOUT TYPE 2 DIABETES AND ITS TREATMENTS

# Who is this booklet for?

This booklet is for people with diabetes who need to take tablets as part of their treatment.

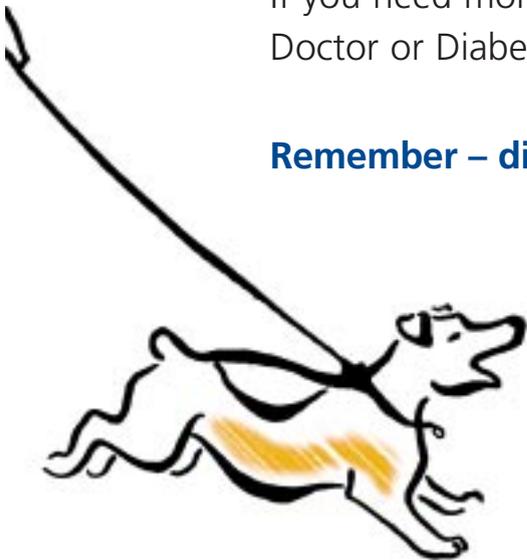
Many people develop diabetes, especially later in life, so you're not alone. You may have felt unwell for some time, and not known why, so being diagnosed with diabetes can be a relief. It also means you can take action to avoid problems in the future.

As part of your treatment your Doctor may give you tablets. You can also take an active role in controlling your diabetes by following a healthy lifestyle and taking good care of yourself.

This booklet can help answer some of the questions you may have about diabetes and its treatment.

If you need more information, or have any worries, your Doctor or Diabetes Specialist Nurse will be happy to help.

**Remember – diabetes should not stop you enjoying life**



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# What is diabetes?

- Diabetes is a long-term disorder characterised by a raised level of glucose (or sugar) in the blood

**Blood glucose and blood sugar are the same thing**

## Where does glucose come from?

- Your body uses glucose (a type of sugar) for energy
- Glucose comes from food, particularly starchy and sugary food (called carbohydrates)
- Digestion breaks down the carbohydrates in your food into glucose which goes into your blood

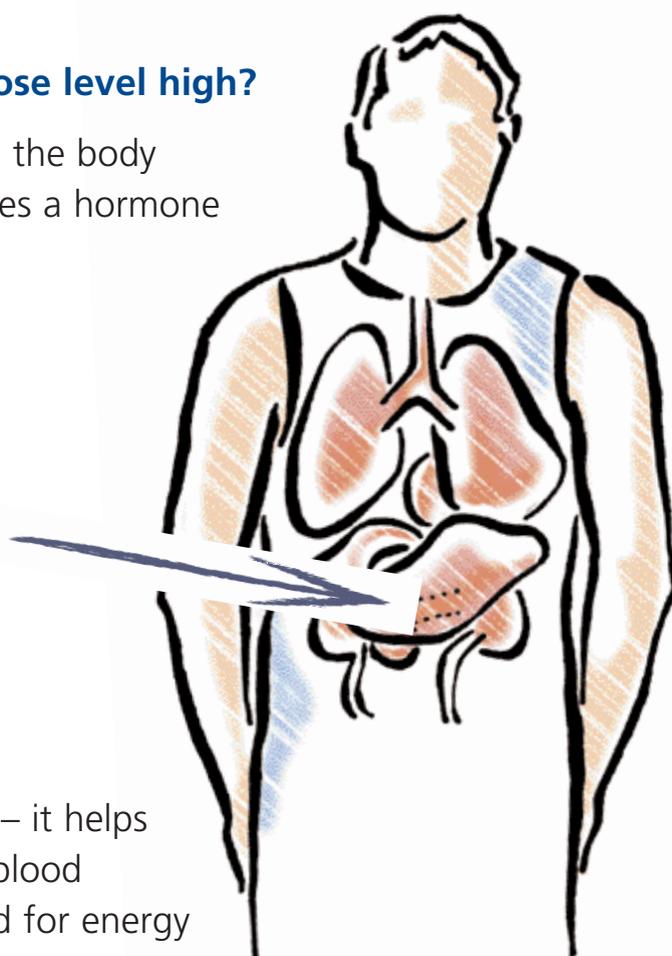


- Some foods provide glucose very quickly, e.g. jams, sweets and fruit juice
- Other foods provide glucose slowly, e.g. potatoes, bread and rice

## Why is my blood glucose level high?

- The *pancreas* (a gland in the body near your stomach) makes a hormone called *insulin*

pancreas



- Insulin is very important – it helps glucose move from the blood into cells where it is used for energy

# What is Type 2 diabetes?

- Type 2 diabetes is when your body can't make enough insulin or when the body can't use the insulin it makes properly
- As a consequence too much glucose stays in your blood
- The job of insulin is to unlock the doors to your cells and let the glucose in

## **Type 2 diabetes**

- Is the most common type of diabetes
- Develops gradually
- Is found mainly in people aged over 40
- Risk factors include:
  - Age
  - Obesity
  - Having a blood relative with diabetes
- Exercise and a healthy diet are first recommended
- Tablets can also help
- If tablets don't work, insulin injections may be needed

# How do I know if I have diabetes?

People with type 2 diabetes often have very few or no symptoms

## **Some of the symptoms you may have:**

- Thirst and a dry mouth
- Passing a lot of urine
- Tiredness
- Blurred vision

**Don't worry – healthy living and taking your medication will make you feel better**

# How is diabetes treated?

A healthy diet and regular exercise play an important part in treating diabetes.



## 1. Eat healthy food

### Why?

- Helps your body use any insulin it makes
- Help you lose weight
- Makes you feel better

You don't need a special diet, foods that are good for people with diabetes are good for all people.



### What sort of food is good?

- Eat mostly vegetables, fruits, wholegrain bread, cereals, rice and pasta
- Eat some fish, chicken, lean meat, eggs
- You may need to see a dietician if you need extra help with your diet plan

### What food should I avoid?

- Eat only small amounts of animal fats and refined sugar (e.g. as in jams, sweets, biscuits, etc.)
- Keep to sensible amounts of alcohol

### Recommended maximum alcohol intake for adults

- Women – 14 units per week
- Men – 21 units per week

One unit = half a pint of ordinary beer/lager, or one standard glass of wine, or one small measure of spirits



### **What else should I do?**

- Eat at regular intervals – don't skip meals
- Don't overeat
- If you smoke – *STOP*

### **A dietician can give you extra help with your meal plan**

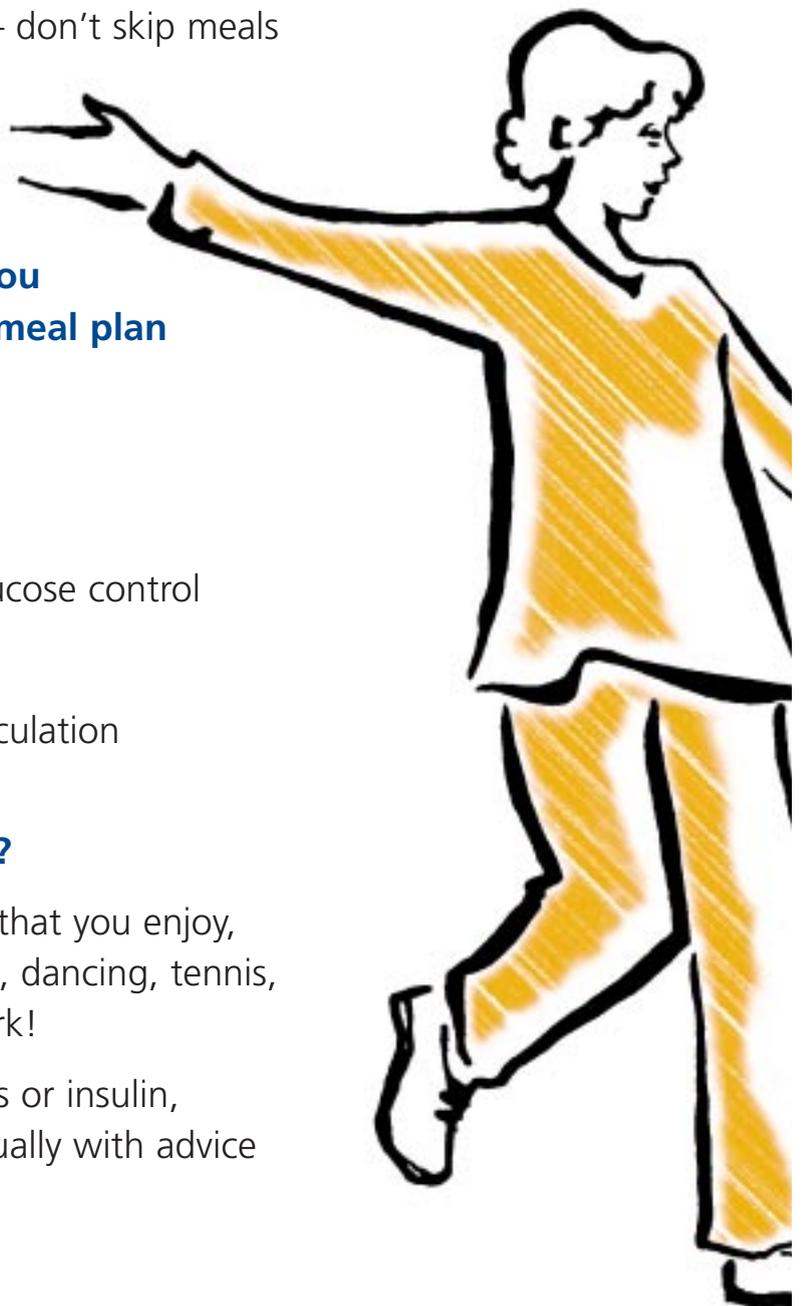
## **2. Keep fit**

### **Why?**

- Improves your blood glucose control
- Helps you lose weight
- Improves your blood circulation

### **What sort of exercise?**

- Any kind of movement that you enjoy, e.g. swimming, walking, dancing, tennis, football, even housework!
- If you are new to tablets or insulin, start your exercise gradually with advice from your Doctor



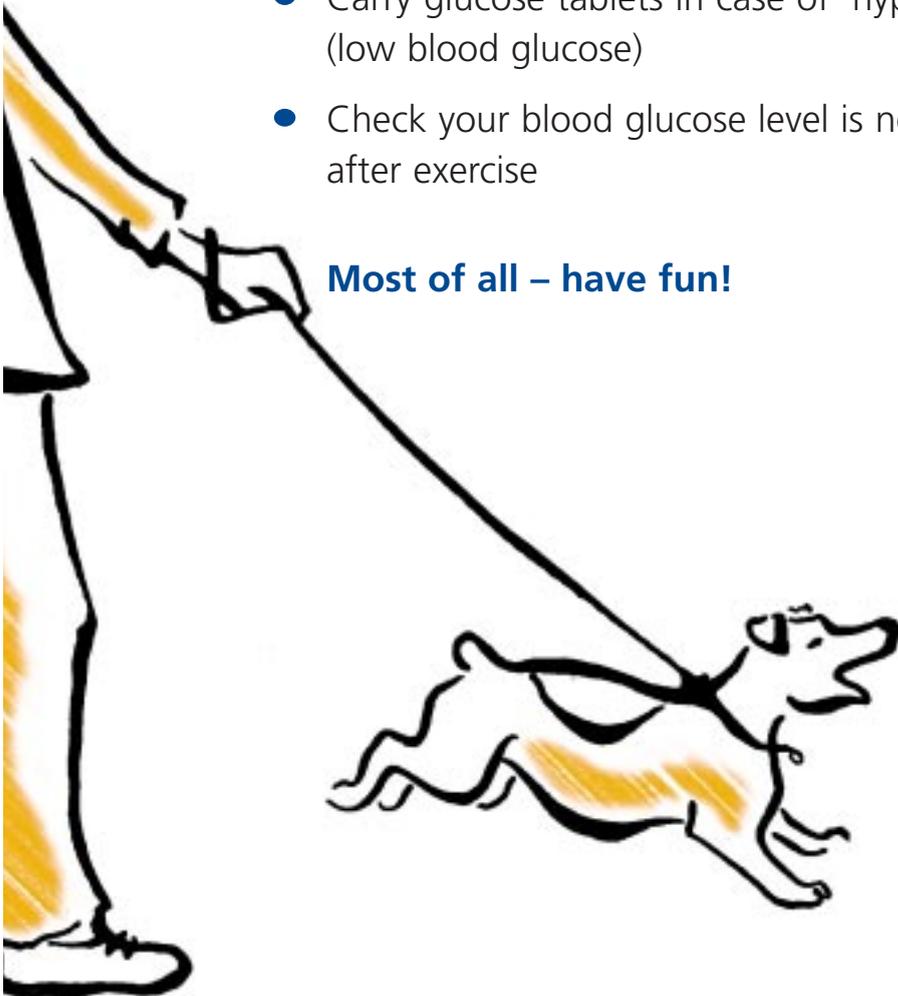
### **How often should I exercise?**

- Aim for 20-30 minutes at least three times a week

### **What else should I do?**

- Wear well-fitted, cushioned shoes or trainers
- Carry glucose tablets in case of 'hypos' (low blood glucose)
- Check your blood glucose level is normal before and after exercise

**Most of all – have fun!**



# Will I need tablets

As well as a healthy diet and regular exercise some people need tablets for their diabetes.

## **Do tablets contain insulin?**

- No

## **Are there different types of tablet?**

- Yes – there are several types of tablet which work in different ways

## **How do tablets work?**

- Some help the pancreas make more insulin
- Some help your body use insulin
- Some slow the digestion of food and absorption of glucose

for diabetes?

**Remember – insulin controls the level of glucose in your blood**

**Which tablet is best for me?**

- Your GP will decide which tablet gives the greatest benefit for your diabetes
- Some people may have to take more than one type of tablet



| Tablets for diabetes   | How do they work?   |
|--|---|
| <p><b>Sulphonylureas</b><br/>glibenclamide,<br/>gliclazide, glimepiride,<br/>glipizide, gliquidone<br/>and tolbutamide</p> | <p>Help the pancreas make more insulin</p>                  |
| <p><b>Biguanides</b><br/>metformin</p>   | <p>Helps your body use the insulin it makes</p>             |
| <p><b>Thiazolidinediones</b><br/>rosiglitazone and<br/>pioglitazone</p>  | <p>Helps your body use the insulin it makes</p>             |
| <p><b>Prandial glucose regulators</b><br/>repaglinide and<br/>nateglinide</p>  | <p>Help the pancreas make more insulin after a meal</p>     |
| <p><b>Alpha-glucosidase inhibitors</b><br/>acarbose</p>  | <p>Slow the digestion of food and absorption of glucose</p> |

# Are there side effects from taking tablets?

Most people don't have any problems taking tablets for diabetes. If you do feel unwell tell your Doctor – you may need to change your tablets or you may just need a change of dose.

## **Some things you may experience when taking tablets for diabetes:**

- Dizziness
- Tiredness
- Upset tummy
- Sickness (nausea)
- Diarrhoea
- Weight gain

# Will I need insulin?

Everyone's diabetes is different and requires different treatments. Some people may need to take insulin.

## Why?

- Because the body gradually stops making its own insulin
- This means that even tablets can't stop your blood glucose from rising too high

## Why is insulin injected?

- Insulin can't be given in tablet form, it would be destroyed in the stomach before it reached the blood stream

**Your Doctor or Diabetes Specialist Nurse will give you more information if you need insulin**



# Why should I test my blood glucose?

- You can check if your blood glucose level is too high or too low – *and take action*
- Your GP or Diabetes Nurse will teach you how and when to test your blood glucose
- You will be given a home monitoring diary to record the results



- Your medication may be changed depending on the results

**Good control of your diabetes helps keep you healthy**

# What should my blood glucose level be?

- Blood glucose is measured in millimoles per litre (mmol/l)
- In general, people with type 2 diabetes should aim to keep their blood glucose levels between 4 and 10mmol/l
- Your Doctor may adjust this target range depending on your treatment
- Your Doctor may also perform a more precise test called a HbA<sub>1c</sub> test that gives an indication of your blood glucose control over the previous few weeks
- Test strips are also available which detect glucose in the urine

# Is good control of my blood glucose necessary?

## Yes

High levels of glucose in your blood over a long time can cause problems with your:

- Eyes
- Kidneys
- Heart
- Nerves
- Blood circulation
- Legs and feet
- *But don't worry* – healthy living and your medication will help you avoid these problems



**Eye tests are free for people with diabetes**

# What if I have a high

- **Hyperglycaemia** means high blood glucose

## How will I feel?

You may have high blood glucose and not know it.

Other times you may experience one or more of the following:

- Tiredness
- Thirst
- Blurred vision
- Passing a lot of urine

These symptoms may develop slowly over hours or even days.



# blood glucose level?

## **What causes hyperglycaemia?**

- Not taking your tablets
- Too much of the wrong kind of food
- Not enough exercise
- Sickness
- Stress
- Weight gain

## **What should I do?**

- Don't panic
- It is normal for your blood glucose level to go up and down in a day
- Always take your tablets
- If you have high blood glucose levels for a few days in a row, or you feel unwell, see your GP or Diabetes Specialist Nurse

# What if I have a low blood glucose level?

- **Hypoglycaemia (hypo)** means low blood glucose

## How will I feel?

You may feel:

- Dizzy, sweaty, hungry, cold, faint, tired, confused or have a pounding heartbeat

## What causes hypoglycaemia?

- Some tablets can make your blood glucose too low in certain situations, for example:
  - Not eating enough food
  - Exercise without eating
  - Drinking alcohol

## What should I do?

- Eat or drink something immediately containing sugar, e.g. glucose tablets or a sugary drink (but not a diet drink)



# Checklist

- ✓ Always take your tablets
- ✓ Test your blood glucose regularly
- ✓ See your Doctor regularly to check your diabetes and general health
- ✓ Have your eyes tested
- ✓ Eat a healthy diet
- ✓ Don't smoke
- ✓ Keep to sensible amounts of alcohol
- ✓ Keep fit
- ✓ Watch your weight
- ✓ Check your feet daily
- ✓ Wear comfortable shoes

**Now go out and enjoy life – don't let diabetes stop you**

## Novo Nordisk Customer Care

**0845 600 5055**

Calls charged at local rate.

Calls may be recorded for training purposes.

Office hours: 08.30 - 17.30



For more information on diabetes visit our website  
where Novo Nordisk booklets are available  
in a downloadable format:

[www.novonordisk.co.uk](http://www.novonordisk.co.uk)

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