

Measure Up

Are you at risk of diabetes?



**If your
waist is
wider
than this
you could
need a
test for
diabetes**



Measure Up – are you at risk of diabetes?

Over two million people in the UK have **diabetes**. Another 750,000 have diabetes but are completely **unaware** of it. Could **you** be one of them? Read this leaflet to find out more...

Diabetes is serious. If left untreated it can lead to blindness, kidney failure, heart disease and other life-threatening complications. Many people with diabetes have had it for between nine and 12 years before it is diagnosed. By this time many of these people will have started to develop some of the complications.


But the **good news** is that if you spot your diabetes early you can greatly reduce the risk of serious health problems. So should you be thinking of going to your GP and getting a test?

Type 1 v Type 2 diabetes

There are two main types of diabetes.

Type 1 diabetes usually affects people under 40 and is treated with insulin injections, diet and regular physical activity.

Type 2 diabetes is usually found in white people over 40 years old and in black and Asian people and people from minority ethnic groups aged over 25 years. It can be treated with diet and physical activity alone – although most people will also



need tablets and sometimes insulin injections.

Over three quarters of people with diabetes have Type 2. **This leaflet is aimed at people with Type 2 diabetes.**

Are you at risk?

If you are white and over 40 years old, or if you're black, Asian or from a minority ethnic group and over 25 years old and have **one or more** of the following risk factors, you should ask your GP for a test for diabetes:

- A close member of your family has Type 2 diabetes (parent or brother or sister).
- You're overweight or your waist is 31.5 inches or over for women; 35 inches or over for Asian men and 37 inches or over for white and black men.
- You have high blood pressure or you've had a heart attack or a stroke.
- You're a woman with polycystic ovary syndrome and you are overweight.
- You've been told you have impaired glucose tolerance or impaired fasting glycaemia.
- You're a woman and you've had gestational diabetes.
- You have severe mental health problems.

The more risk factors that apply to you, the **greater your risk** of having diabetes.



Your age

You're at risk of diabetes if you're over 40 or you're over 25 and black, Asian or from a minority ethnic group. The risk also rises with age so the older you get the more at risk you are.

The family

Having diabetes in the family puts you at risk. The closer the relative is, the greater the risk. So if your mum or dad has diabetes, rather than your aunt or uncle, it's more likely you will develop the condition too.

Ethnicity


African-Caribbean or South Asian people who live in the UK are at least five times more likely to have diabetes than the white population.

Your weight

Not all people with diabetes are overweight but the stats show that over 80 per cent of people diagnosed with Type 2 diabetes are overweight. The more overweight and the more inactive you are the greater your risk. If you don't know whether you're overweight, ask your GP to measure your BMI.

Your waist

Women – if your waist measures 31.5in (80cm) or more you've got an increased risk.



Men – if you're white or black and your waist is 37in (94cm) or more you have an increased risk of developing diabetes; if you're an Asian man the figure is 35in (90cm) or more.



The other factors

If you've been diagnosed with any problems with your **circulation**, had a heart attack or stroke, or if you've got high blood pressure you may be at an increased risk of diabetes.

Pregnant women can develop a temporary type of diabetes – gestational diabetes. Having this – or giving birth to a large baby – can increase the risk of a woman going on to develop diabetes in the future.

Women with **polycystic ovary syndrome** who are overweight are at an increased risk of developing diabetes.

If you've been told you have either **impaired fasting glycaemia** (IFG) or **impaired glucose tolerance** (IGT) it means the level of glucose (sugar) in your blood is higher than normal but you don't have diabetes and you should follow a healthy diet, lose weight if you need to and keep active, to help yourself prevent diabetes. But make sure you're regularly tested for diabetes.



Other conditions such as **raised triglycerides** (a type of blood fat) and **severe mental health problems** can also increase your risk.


The symptoms


The symptoms of untreated diabetes will usually be very obvious in people with Type 1 diabetes but not so clear or non-existent in people with Type 2 diabetes. If you're older you may put the symptoms down to 'getting on a bit'. Taking early action is key so if any of the following apply to you, ask your GP for a diabetes test:

- increased thirst
- going to the toilet all the time – especially at night
- extreme tiredness
- weight loss
- genital itching or regular episodes of thrush
- slow healing of wounds
- blurred vision.

The complications

Diabetes is serious because it can lead to life-threatening complications. These include:

- blindness
 - kidney failure
 - heart disease
 - stroke
 - nerve damage that can lead to amputations.
- 



But the good news is that you can reduce your risk of developing complications by getting diagnosed early and then controlling your diabetes. You can lead a full and healthy life with diabetes but the key is getting diagnosed as early as possible.

What to do next

If you think anything you've read in this leaflet applies to you go to your GP and ask them to test you for diabetes. Diabetes is a serious condition that needs treatment. **The sooner you act the better.**


Further information

Call the Diabetes UK Careline on 0845 120 2960 (Textphone 020 7424 1031) or email careline@diabetes.org.uk for confidential support and information. Visit the Diabetes UK website at www.diabetes.org.uk/MeasureUp

About Diabetes UK

Diabetes UK is the leading charity in the UK for people with diabetes, their family, friends and carers. Our mission is to improve the lives of people with the condition and to work towards a future without diabetes.

We are a membership organisation – to join ring 0800 138 5605 or visit www.diabetes.org.uk/join



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Call the Diabetes UK Careline on 0845 120 2960 for further support and information

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