

# A Short Guide to Diabetes

## Signs and Symptoms

- Excessive thirst and increased urination, especially at night
- Tiredness and lack of energy
- Losing weight without trying to
- Blurry vision
- Cuts/wounds that take longer than expected to heal
- Genital itching or thrush

## What to do if you have these symptoms

If you have any of the symptoms, **contact your GP to book an appointment**. These symptoms don't always mean you have diabetes, but if you do, the sooner you find out, the sooner you can get your health back on track. Diabetes is caused by having too much sugar in your blood. There is no cure yet, but you can still stay healthy if you keep your blood sugar levels under control.

## What happens if you ignore the signs of diabetes

Type 1 diabetes appears quite rapidly and can make you very ill. If Type 1 diabetes is not treated, it can lead to diabetic ketoacidosis (poisonous chemicals which build up in the blood as the body begins to break down its own tissues to survive) which can lead to coma and death. Type 1 diabetes is kept under control with Insulin injections.

Type 2 diabetes develops more slowly, especially in the early stages. But if left untreated it can still affect your major organs and your nervous system, and requires treatment. Some people with Type 2 Diabetes need medication, but sometimes a change of diet is enough to control it.

## What to expect if you receive a diagnosis

Your GP or diabetic nurse should talk you through your diagnosis and explain what it means. You might need to take medication to control your blood sugar levels. Good blood sugar control can reduce your risk of any diabetic complications. Your blood sugar levels can be checked with regular blood tests.

You will also be offered annual checks for any health problems caused by diabetes. This will include checking the nerves in your feet and legs. You should be given advice about how to protect your health with simple lifestyle changes, which can limit the potential damage from diabetes. They may also put you in touch with any support groups in the area.

## Eye Screening

Retinal screening is one of the annual appointments offered to people with diabetes. Screening allows early detection of diabetic eye disease, which can cause sight loss if left untreated. There are treatments available for diabetic eye disease, but early detection is vital.

For more information about diabetic eye screening, please visit [www.desphiow.co.uk](http://www.desphiow.co.uk)