

Welcome to the Salisbury House Surgery Patient Participation Group Newsletter.

This issue of the Salisbury House Surgery Patient Participation Group Newsletter focuses on diabetes. What is it, why should we all think about it and consider taking action?

Diabetes. Why should I be concerned?

Most people that are diagnosed with type 2 diabetes have the condition without symptoms for some years before diagnosis.

Diagnosis is often the result of pathology tests unrelated to an investigation for diabetes.

In this newsletter we focus on type 2 diabetes, (around 90% of the incidence of diabetes and increasing in occurrence). Also there is a condition called pre-diabetes, where blood sugar levels are raised, although not as highly as in type 2 diabetes, this may be a pre-cursor to development of type 2.

Why is diabetes a significant health problem?

When we eat food the sugar is digested and passed into the bloodstream primarily as glucose. Normally insulin is released by the pancreas to control the level of glucose in the bloodstream and promote the uptake of glucose from the blood into cells to fuel our bodies.

When this control fails elevated levels of glucose remain in the circulation. Over time high glucose levels in your blood can seriously damage your heart, your eyes, your feet and your kidneys.

What is Diabetes?

Diabetes mellitus, more usually referred to as diabetes, is a group of metabolic disorders characterized by high blood sugar levels. Diabetes is due to either the pancreas not producing enough insulin, or the cells of the body not responding properly to the insulin produced. There are three main types of diabetes.

Type 1, or juvenile onset diabetes, results from the pancreas' failure to produce enough insulin.

Type 2 typically develops in later life due to cells in the body failing to respond properly to insulin or to a reduced production of insulin by the pancreas, or a combination of both.

The third type is gestational diabetes, found rarely during pregnancy.

Diagnosis

Simple pathology tests provide the basic information to help a clinician diagnose diabetes. NHS health checks are now offered to people between the ages of 40 and 75 every 5 years including an assessment of the risk of diabetes.

Don't ignore the offer of this assessment when you get the letter!

Diabetes risk factors

Your risk increases with age. You're more at risk if you're over 25 and African-Caribbean, Black African or South Asian or over 40 and white.

You're two to six times more likely to get Type 2 diabetes if you have a parent, brother, sister or child with diabetes.

You're more at risk if you've ever had high blood pressure.

You're more at risk of Type 2 diabetes if you're overweight, especially if you're large around the middle.

Diabetes UK provides an online tool to determine your risk of developing diabetes.

To try this, follow the link:

<https://tinyurl.com/yxcmzr2x>

Do you have symptoms that should be investigated?

Visit your GP as soon as possible if you:

- Feel continuously very thirsty.
- Urinate more frequently, particularly at night.
- Feel very tired.
- Lose weight and muscle mass.
- Itch around the penis or vagina.
- Have frequent episodes of thrush.
- Heal slowly.
- Have blurred vision.

Managing type 2 diabetes

For most patients type 2 diabetes can be managed by controlling diet and by exercise. Salisbury house runs a clinic specialising in management of diabetes to provide specific advice.

In general you will need to opt for food with lower levels of fats, especially saturated fats, and sugar. Most importantly you will need to learn how to read the labels on foods that you buy.

Regular meals including starting the day with breakfast and avoiding late eating allow the body to use insulin most effectively and sleep provides the break the body needs to reset its hormonal systems.