Developed and fully funded by AstraZeneca. This guide is for people diagnosed with type 2 diabetes. It is not intended to replace discussions between you and your healthcare professional.

AstraZeneca

Your guide to managing
Type 2 diabetes

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Welcome to your type 2 diabetes guide

If you have been diagnosed with type 2 diabetes, you may have some questions or worries about it. This guide is here to help you learn more about the condition. You can also find out how to manage type 2 diabetes and where to find support.

Tips for getting the most out of this guide

Take your time to read the information carefully. Remember that you can come back to this guide whenever you want to refresh your understanding.

Ask your doctor, pharmacist or nurse if you need any additional support or information.

Bring this guide to all your medical appointments so that you can use it with your healthcare team, as needed.

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Understanding my type 2 diabetes

What is type 2 diabetes?

Type 2 diabetes is a condition that causes your blood sugar levels (also known as blood glucose levels) to become too high. This is because your body is not making enough of a hormone called insulin, or the insulin made is not working properly.[1]

Not everyone with type 2 diabetes has symptoms, so it's important to get checked out by your healthcare team.[2]

Symptoms of type 2 diabetes can include:[2]

- Needing to pee more than usual
- Feelings of itchiness around your genital areas, or repeatedly getting thrush
- Feeling thirsty all the time
- Cuts or wounds taking longer to heal
- Feeling very tired
- Blurry vision
- Losing weight without trying to

Remember, even if you can't see or feel any of these symptoms, this does not mean that it's not affecting your body.

It's important that you take type 2 diabetes seriously, as it can increase your risk of developing kidney and heart problems.[3,4] Managing your diabetes well can help you reduce the chance of this happening.

Your healthcare team will also be able to help you monitor your kidneys and heart. They can advise you with the treatment and support that works best for you. That's why it's important to take medication as prescribed by your doctor, pharmacist or nurse.

How can type 2 diabetes affect my body[5,6]

Heart problems

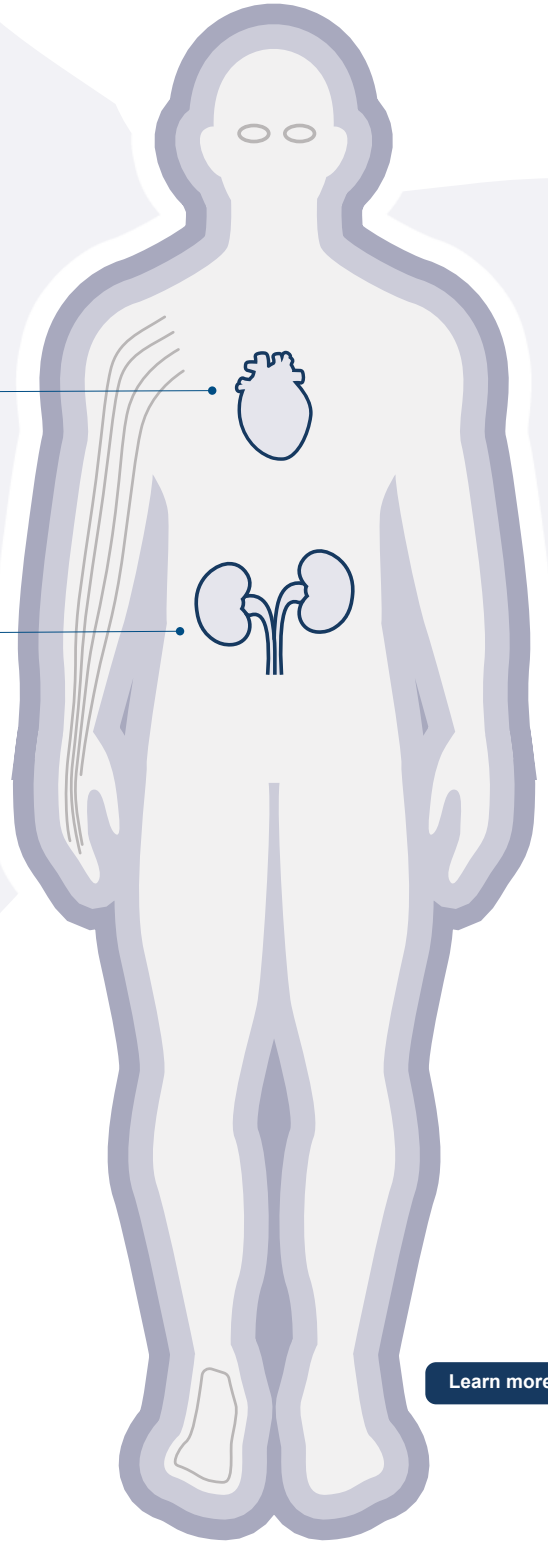
High blood sugar levels can damage your blood vessels (channels that help carry blood throughout your body). This can lead to heart attacks and strokes. Heart diseases can also affect your circulation (the flow of blood from your heart around your body), which can lead to problems with your eyes and feet.[3,7]

People with diabetes are twice as likely to have heart disease or strokes.[7]

Kidney problems (nephropathy)

Diabetes can damage your kidneys over a long period of time. This is caused by high blood sugar levels and high blood pressure. It can be harder for your kidneys to remove any extra fluid or waste from your body.[4]

Around 1 in 3 people with diabetes will develop kidney disease.[8]



Learn more on the next page >

How can type 2 diabetes affect my body[5,6]

Eye problems (retinopathy)

Diabetes can increase the risk of developing an eye condition known as diabetic retinopathy, which can affect your eyesight. This is caused by high blood sugar levels, which can damage the blood vessels in the eyes.[9]

Nerve damage (neuropathy)

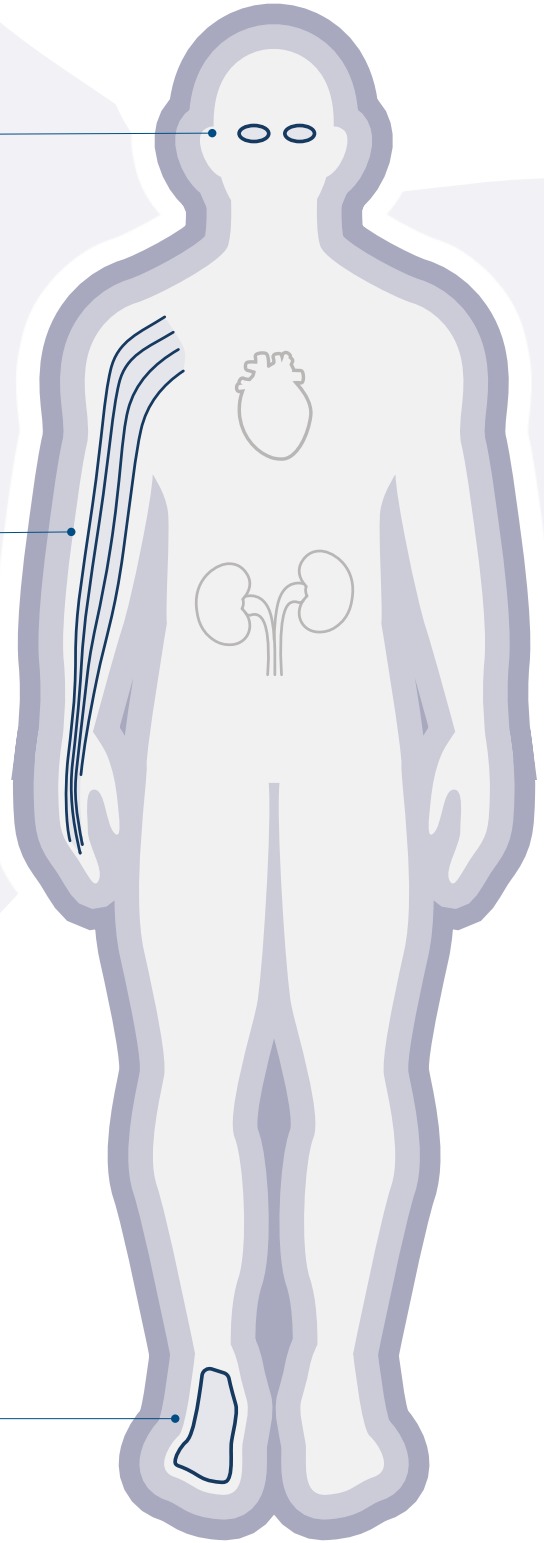
Over time, high blood sugar levels can cause damage to your nerves. It can make it harder for your nerves to carry important messages between your brain and body. This can affect the way you see, hear, feel or move.[10]

Foot problems

High blood sugar levels can affect your blood circulation and the feeling in your feet. Foot problems caused by diabetes are serious and can lead to foot ulcers, infections and amputation, if left untreated.[11]

It's important to remember that…

You can help look after your body to reduce the risk of developing these conditions by taking your medications as they have been prescribed to you, by your doctor, pharmacist or nurse.



Looking after my type 2 diabetes

Managing type 2 diabetes can be challenging at times. But there are ways that can help you take control of your condition. Learn more about how you can manage type 2 diabetes day-to-day and medications when you are ill.

How can I manage my type 2 diabetes?

Get the information you need

Talk to your healthcare team if you have any questions about your diabetes. The more you know about your treatment, the more in control and confident you may feel.[12]

Set realistic goals

Why not try swapping your snacks to something healthier such as a piece of fruit? You can also look at your treatment goals with your healthcare team and break them down into mini targets that you can work step-by-step towards.[12]

Healthy eating

This can help you manage your blood sugar levels, blood pressure and cholesterol levels. It can also help you manage your weight and reduce the risk of other complications of diabetes, such as heart problems.[13] You can talk to your healthcare team to find out more, or ask if you can speak to a dietician for further guidance. **Scan the QR code below to learn more about how you can eat healthily.***

Try to be active

Keeping active with exercise can help lower your blood pressure, improve cholesterol levels and lose weight, as well as improving low mood and reducing stress levels.[14] For example, you can try doing a mixture of different activities to find out what best suits you, such as swimming or gardening.[14] You can even keep active at home by stretching your arms and legs whilst sitting in a chair or doing household chores such as hoovering.[14] **Scan the QR code below for more tips on how to stay active.***

Managing your emotions

You may need support for all the emotions that you may feel with diabetes, such as stress, feeling low or burnt out.[15,16] Getting enough sleep and building rest and relaxation time into your routine can help you cope better with stress.[16] You may find it helpful to talk about any concerns you have or how you're feeling with your friends and family.[16]

Take your medication

You should take your medications exactly as prescribed by your doctor, pharmacist or nurse.

Scan the QR codes below for more advice and support:

Healthy eating*

Staying active*

Information from Diabetes UK

These associations are not affiliated with this document or with AstraZeneca.

Knowing how to manage your lifestyle and medication can help you feel more in control of your type 2 diabetes.

What happens if I become ill?

Having an illness can raise your blood sugar levels. When you are ill, the body's natural defence system tries to fight this off. As part of this defence, more sugar is released into the blood. This can make blood sugar levels rise. It can happen even if you are eating less than usual.[17]

Common symptoms of high blood sugar levels include:[18]

- Blurry vision
- Losing weight
- Feeling very thirsty
- Peeing a lot
- Feeling weak or tired

Feeling or being sick, or having diarrhoea can also make your blood sugar levels drop as you're not absorbing food as usual.[17] **Remember, there are ways to help you manage your type 2 diabetes during an illness. This guidance is sometimes known as 'Sick day' rules**.[19]

If you are ill, you may need to pause or stop taking certain diabetes medications (learn more about these medications on the next page).[20]

Talk to your doctor, pharmacist or nurse for medical advice if you have one or more of the illnesses listed below:[19]

- **Common cold**
- **Infections**
  e.g. chest infection or urinary tract infection
- **Influenza**
- **Abscess**
  (a painful, swollen area that contains pus)
- **Pneumonia**
  (inflammation of the lungs)
- **Diarrhoea or vomiting**
- **An injury,**
  such as a fracture

There may be other illnesses not listed here that you may need to stop taking your medications for if you're ill. Talk to your doctor, pharmacist, or nurse if you have any worries or questions.

What medications do I need to pause or stop when I'm ill?

If you are ill, you may need to pause or stop taking certain diabetes medications, such as:[20]

- **Metformin**
- **Sulfonylureas**
- **SGLT2 inhibitors**
- **GLP-1 analogues**

Ask your doctor, pharmacist or nurse before pausing or stopping any medication.

Abbreviations
GLP-1=glucagon-like peptide-1; SGLT2 inhibitors=sodium-glucose co-transporter-2 inhibitors.

This is not a full list of medications. You may be taking other medications that need to be paused. See appropriate patient information leaflets or speak to your doctor, pharmacist or nurse for more information about taking your medications when you are ill.

How do I manage my medications when I'm ill?

PAUSE

There are certain diabetes medications, like the ones listed on page 14, that you may need to stop taking or adjust if you're ill and not eating or drinking normally.[20]

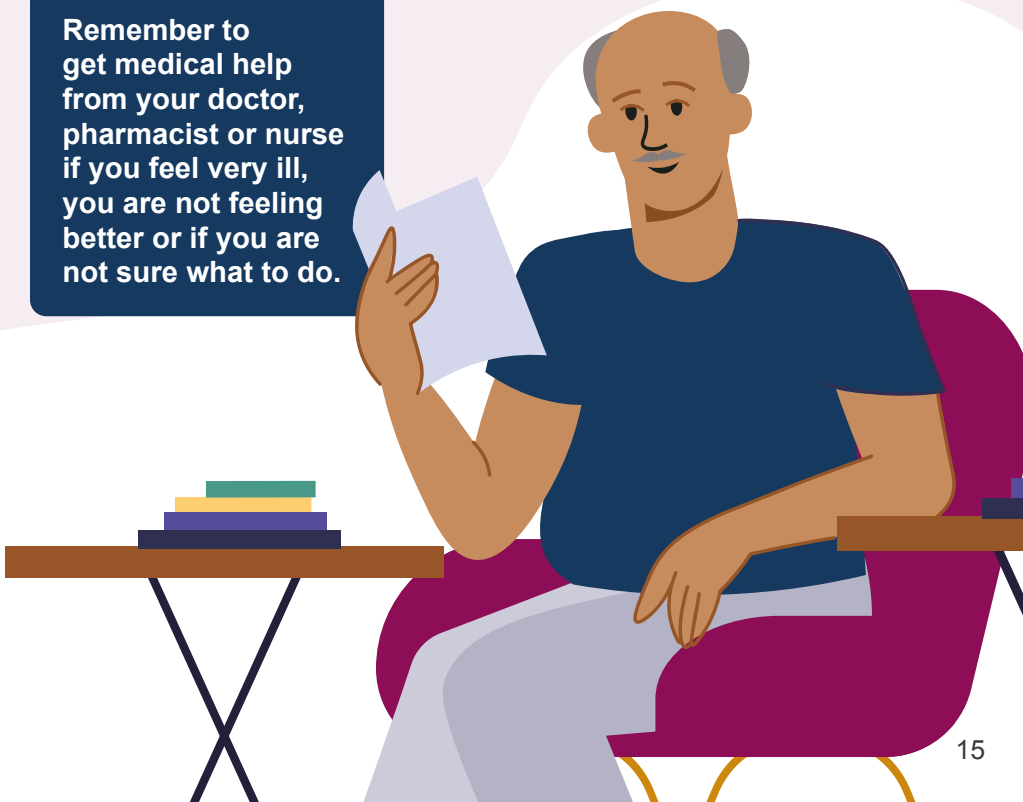
LOOK OUT

It is important to look out for symptoms of high blood sugar. These can include thirst, passing more pee than usual and tiredness. Seek medical advice if you have these symptoms.[20]

RESTART

It's very important to **restart your medications** once you have recovered from your illness and you have been eating and drinking normally over the past 24–48 hours, unless your doctor, pharmacist, or nurse tells you otherwise.[20]

Remember to get medical help from your doctor, pharmacist or nurse if you feel very ill, you are not feeling better or if you are not sure what to do.



How can I look after my type 2 diabetes when I'm ill?[17,21]

Symptoms of diabetes may also make your illness or infection worse. So, it's important to know how you can manage your diabetes when you're ill. Here are some tips that can help you manage your diabetes during an illness:

- Try to rest more and avoid doing any difficult exercises.
- Stay hydrated by drinking plenty of unsweetened drinks and eat little and often.
- Check your blood sugar levels. If you can, check it at least every 4 hours, or as advised by your healthcare team, including during the night.
- Talk to your healthcare team to check if you need to adjust your diabetes medication when you are ill. There are some medications that you should not take as much of, or you should stop taking.
- Insulin may need to be increased or decreased when you're ill. Talk to your healthcare team for more advice on how to manage your insulin doses during illness.
- Talk to your healthcare team if you think you have an infection. You may need antibiotics for this.
- Treat symptoms such as high temperature or a cough with basic over-the-counter medicines. These can be things such as painkillers and cough syrups. These do not have to be sugar free, as they contain very little sugar and are taken in small amounts. Ask your pharmacist for advice.
- Keep eating or drinking. If you can't keep food down try eating little and often. Try snacks or drinks that can give you energy. Try to sip sugary drinks. If you're still not able to keep any fluids down get medical help as soon as possible.

Talk to your healthcare team if you have any questions about managing your diabetes when you are ill.

Preparing for my appointment

At your appointments, your healthcare team may ask you questions about your type 2 diabetes and how you have found your treatment. You may find it helpful to think about how to respond to these questions before you go to your appointments, so that you can get the most out of them.

What should I bring to my appointment?[22]

- [ ] **Your guide to managing Type 2 diabetes**
  You can bring this booklet to help you write down any notes in the next section, such as details of your symptoms or any questions you want to ask. You may also want to write down anything important that is discussed between you and your healthcare team during your appointment.

- [ ] **List of your medications**
  Bring an updated list of all the medications that you're currently taking for any health conditions.

- [ ] **A friend or family member**
  If you're worried about going to your appointment by yourself, you can ask someone you trust to go with you for support.

How to have an open and honest conversation

Your appointment is an opportunity for you to be open and honest with your healthcare team, so that they can work out how best to help you.[22,23]

Don't be afraid to ask questions

If you're unsure about anything or if your questions aren't being answered, don't be afraid to ask your healthcare team. If you do not understand any words, ask them to write it down or explain it to you.

Be honest about your experiences

Diabetes can affect everyone differently and your healthcare team may not know what you're struggling with, so it's important to share any concerns or questions that you may have.

Talk about things that matter to you the most

If you feel that the conversations are all about your diabetes numbers, try asking if you can talk about how diabetes is affecting your life and not just your blood sugars.

Remember, your healthcare team is here to help.

What questions should I ask my healthcare team?

You may find it helpful to plan ahead of your appointments and think about what questions you want to ask them. Here are some examples:

How can treatment help me manage my type 2 diabetes?

How often will I need to see my healthcare team during my treatment?

What do my blood sugar numbers mean?

How often should I check my blood sugar levels?

How does type 2 diabetes affect my kidneys and heart?

What can I do to reduce the risk of developing kidney and heart problems?

How can I better manage my symptoms?

Who can I contact if I have any questions?

What treatment goals can I set?

How can treatment impact my day to day?

How will my treatment affect my work?

Can I still travel when taking treatment?

Where can I find more information or support?

My notes

You can use the space below to write down any notes or questions you want to discuss with your healthcare team at your next appointment.

My healthcare team contact details

Name: _____

Contact Number: _____

Additional support and information

You can find out more information and support from the following organisation in the UK:

Diabetes UK

A research and support charity that provides health information and support services for people living with diabetes and their loved ones.

This association is not affiliated with this document or with AstraZeneca.

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