**CATSHILL VILLAGE SURGERY**

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**Information for patients with diabetes**

Many of the routine annual reviews will not be available as the pandemic continues. You should of course still contact us if you are unwell or need advice.

Please do not be unduly concerned about the delay in completing your screening. Most of these checks can be safely deferred for some months. There are also many online resources (such as Diabetes UK) which can be used until routine care restarts.

<https://www.diabetes.org.uk/>

In the meantime you can continue to self-manage your diabetes and general health by [eating healthily,](http://www.nhsgrampiandiabetes.scot.nhs.uk/managing-your-diabetes/) [getting some exercise](http://www.nhsgrampiandiabetes.scot.nhs.uk/physical-activity-exercise-and-covid-19/), [looking after your feet](http://www.nhsgrampiandiabetes.scot.nhs.uk/your-feet-and-diabetes/) and, if relevant to you, checking your blood glucose levels and adjusting your insulin.

You could use this time to learn more about your diabetes or do one of the online modules linked to on the [type 1 diabetes](http://www.nhsgrampiandiabetes.scot.nhs.uk/type-1-diabetes-2/) and [type 2 diabetes](http://www.nhsgrampiandiabetes.scot.nhs.uk/type-2/) pages.

Whilst there will be a pause in routine diabetes care and monitoring during the pandemic there are plenty things that you can do to maintain, and possibly improve your diabetes control during this time.

**Covid-19 (coronavirus) and diabetes:**

Unfortunately, having diabetes puts you at greater risk from Covid-19. The Government have defined a list of conditions that put patients at moderate risk (clinically vulnerable) from Covid-19. Diabetes is one of these. You may also have other risk factors also defined on this list such as being 70 years of age or older, having obesity or other illnesses like heart, kidney or respiratory disease. Patients with diabetes do not fall into the ‘shielded’ category ( so called ‘high risk’ or ‘clinically extremely vulnerable’).

Things you can do:

* Take the government advice on social distancing/ isolation
* Wear a face mask in public
* Wash your hands regularly
* Ensure you have your regular supplies of medication and test strips
* If you have Type 1 diabetes ensure you have ketone testing strips for blood or urine

**Illness and diabetes:**

There are some extremely useful videos on the Worcestershire Acute Hospitals Trust website (diabetes page).

<https://www.worcsacute.nhs.uk/diabetes>

Key messages (so-called ‘sick day rules’)

* Monitor your blood glucose more regularly
* NEVER stop taking insulin
* STOP Metformin tablets (eg. Sukkarto, Glucophage)
* SGLT-2 inhibitor tablets MUST be stopped until you are well again (eg. dapagliflozin, canagliflozin, ertugliflozin, empagliflozin)
* Stop medications such as diuretics, ACE inhibitors (and speak to the GP if you are unsure)
* Drink plenty of fluids
* Rest
* Patients with type 1 diabetes must check ketone levels to exclude diabetic ketoacidosis (DKA) which can be life-threatening.

**Diabetes Care – a 15 point plan:**

**1) HbA1c**

The best way look after this is to eat more healthily, exercise and take your medications.

In type 2 diabetes, reducing the amount of carbohydrate foods you consume can markedly effect your HbA1c.

If you are on certain tablets (e.g. gliclazide or glimepiride) or insulin, you should have a home blood glucose meter. If you have type 1 diabetes you should be testing your blood glucose at least 4x per day (more often if you are unwell or pregnant). If you have type 2 diabetes and use insulin, the number of times you monitor will depend on your insulin regime. Drivers on these medications or insulin should always check their blood glucose before driving.

If your HbA1c was 58 or less at the last test, this is very reassuring and we will not be calling you in at present. We are prioritising those with uncontrolled diabetes, followed by those with recent management change and then those with suboptimal control.

**2) Blood pressure checks**

Take your blood pressure tablets as prescribed and waiting a few months before getting your blood pressure rechecked will be fine.

It is worth considering buying a home blood pressure monitor (such as the Omron M2 basic, Omron M2 compact or the Boots upper arm blood pressure monitor). If you have a home monitor you can check your blood pressure at home. If it is regularly > 140/90, it is advisable to book a telephone appointment with a GP. We may then ask you to provide a series of blood pressure readings on one of our home blood pressure monitoring forms (on our website). Please do not send these into us uninvited as we could be deluged with a lot of extra administration.

**3) Cholesterol check**

You should ensure you take your cholesterol tablet (statin) if you have been prescribed this.  
It will be ok to wait a few months before this is rechecked. This will also be helped by following a healthy lifestyle, in terms of diet and exercise.

**4)** [**Eye screening**](https://www.diabetes.org.uk/guide-to-diabetes/managing-your-diabetes/15-healthcare-essentials/what-are-the-15-healthcare-essentials#eyes)

Routine eye screening (retinopathy) appointments were suspended at the beginning of the pandemic.  Your appointment will be rescheduled when the screening programme restarts.

If you develop any sudden change in your vision then contact a local optometrist, preferably your own one and ask for an urgent NHS appointment

Ophthalmology services have also been disrupted by the pandemic. Please contact the department directly if you have a concern or query regarding your follow up appointment.

**5)** [**Foot and leg check**](https://www.diabetes.org.uk/guide-to-diabetes/managing-your-diabetes/15-healthcare-essentials/what-are-the-15-healthcare-essentials#feet)

Please check your feet regularly and see the Diabetes UK website for guidance.

**If you develop a foot ulcer then this is an emergency and you must contact your GP surgery or podiatrist immediately.**

<https://www.diabetes.org.uk/guide-to-diabetes/complications/feet/touch-the-toes>

(Video - how to test for sensitivity in your feet)

<https://www.diabetes.org.uk/resources-s3/2017-08/Simple%20Steps%20to%20Healthy%20Feet.pdf>

<https://www.diabetes.co.uk/foot-care/foot-checks.html> (Video)

**6)** [**Kidney tests**](https://www.diabetes.org.uk/guide-to-diabetes/managing-your-diabetes/15-healthcare-essentials/what-are-the-15-healthcare-essentials#kidneys)

If your last urine screening (ACR) was normal then it will be fine to wait a few months for this to be rechecked.

If you have been prescribed medicine to protect your kidneys or treat your blood pressure then please continue to take these medications as prescribed.

If there is a need to check things in the interim then your healthcare professional will arrange this.

**7)** [**Advice on diet**](https://www.diabetes.org.uk/guide-to-diabetes/managing-your-diabetes/15-healthcare-essentials/what-are-the-15-healthcare-essentials#diet)

It is important to follow [healthy eating](https://www.nhsgrampiandiabetes.scot.nhs.uk/managing-your-diabetes/) advice on the website.

In type 2 diabetes, reducing the amount of carbohydrate you consume is important. Carbohydrates include sweet sugary foods (cakes, biscuits, sweets, puddings), starchy foods (potatoes, pasta, rice, bread, cereals) and fruit sugars (most fruit will raise your blood sugar level, but berries are lower ‘GI’ and have less of an effect). If you are not on insulin or agents such as gliclazide/glimepiride, intermittent ‘fasting’ type diets such as 5:2 can be helpful for glycaemic (sugar) control and weight loss.

<https://thefastdiet.co.uk/>

In type 1 diabetes you will have advice on how to calculate your rapid acting insulin dose for meals, depending on the carbohydrate content.

The Diabetes UK website even has recipes if you want to try something new.

Carbs and Cals is a useful book, and comes as a handy smart phone ‘App’. It can calculate the carbohydrate content of various foods, including bought products with useful pictures of portion sizes.

<https://www.carbsandcals.com/>

**8)** [**Emotional and psychological support**](https://www.diabetes.org.uk/guide-to-diabetes/managing-your-diabetes/15-healthcare-essentials/what-are-the-15-healthcare-essentials#talk)

Mental wellbeing is an important part of your self-care.

You can self-refer to **Healthy Minds** for free and confidential support on 0300 302 1313 or by completing the form on the link below:

<https://www.hacw.nhs.uk/self-referral/>

**9)** [**Diabetes education course**](https://www.diabetes.org.uk/guide-to-diabetes/managing-your-diabetes/15-healthcare-essentials/what-are-the-15-healthcare-essentials#education)

All routine diabetes education programmes are cancelled for the time being. If you are booked on a course you will be notified and re-invited when dates become available. You can contact the diabetes team on wah-tr.worcsdiabetesed@nhs.net or 01527 488697 (answer machine) for non-urgent enquiries

For patients with type 2 diabetes, Mapmydiabetes is available.

Email wah-tr.worcsdiabetesed@nhs.net to be set up with an account.

<https://www.mapmyhealth.co.uk/mapmydiabetes/>

People with Type 1 diabetes can access <https://www.bertieonline.org.uk/>

For patients with pre-diabetes, you can self-refer to ‘Healthier You’. In the current situation they are offering online and virtual support. <https://preventing-diabetes.co.uk/>

Diabetes UK have a range of resources available to provide additional support, with topics including exercise for being active at home, diet, and mental wellbeing during the current situation while staying at home or self-isolating. Please visit:  
<https://www.diabetes.org.uk/about_us/news/coronavirus>

<https://www.diabetes.org.uk/guide-to-diabetes/managing-your-diabetes/staying-home>

**10)** [**Care from diabetes specialists**](https://www.diabetes.org.uk/guide-to-diabetes/managing-your-diabetes/15-healthcare-essentials/what-are-the-15-healthcare-essentials#specialists)

Hospital trusts have had to markedly change their services during the pandemic. Most clinic appointments are severely restricted, and many of those that do occur are remote, by telephone. Specialist support is still of course available.

If you are known to secondary care services and need **non-urgent help** with your diabetes please contact your [diabetes clinic helpline](https://www.nhsgrampiandiabetes.scot.nhs.uk/contact-details/) or the diabetes specialist nurses at Smallwood House in Redditch (wah-tr.redditchbromsgrovediabetes@nhs.net 01527 488649).

If not previously known to secondary care services then your practice can discuss or refer you should this be necessary.

**11)** [**Free flu jab**](https://www.diabetes.org.uk/guide-to-diabetes/managing-your-diabetes/15-healthcare-essentials/what-are-the-15-healthcare-essentials#flu%20jab)

Hopefully you will have received this in the last 12 months, however the flu jab does not protect you against Covid-19.

However, it is even more important than ever before this year, that you take up your offer of a free flu jab (which will become available in the autumn) in order to minimise the risks to your health from influenza.

Due to social distancing measures and the likelihood that we will be asked to vaccinate a much larger cohort of patients this year, our flu clinics will be run very differently to normal. Please keep a look out for information on our website – we will update this as and when we have more information. We may need to use a different venue or operate a ‘drive thru’ service.

**12) Good care if you are in hospital**

There is an in-patient and on-call diabetes team that can give advice to healthcare professionals looking after you on any ward.

**13)** [**Support with any sexual problems**](https://www.diabetes.org.uk/guide-to-diabetes/managing-your-diabetes/15-healthcare-essentials/what-are-the-15-healthcare-essentials#sex)

Diabetes UK have a number of articles on sexual problems and diabetes.

<https://www.diabetes.org.uk/guide-to-diabetes/life-with.../sex-and-diabetes>

<https://www.diabetes.org.uk/guide-to-diabetes/complications/sexual-problems-women>

<https://www.diabetes.org.uk/guide-to-diabetes/complications/sexual-problems-men>

**14)** [**Help to stop smoking**](https://www.diabetes.org.uk/guide-to-diabetes/managing-your-diabetes/15-healthcare-essentials/what-are-the-15-healthcare-essentials#smoking)

Please visit the NHS website for help and support in giving up smoking. <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/quit-smoking/nhs-stop-smoking-services-help-you-quit/>

Alternatively you can call the free Smokefree National Helpline on 0300 123 1044.

**15) Specialist care if you are planning to have a baby**

If you have diabetes it is vitally important to plan pregnancies. Some medications taken by patients with diabetes (for example ACE inhibitors e.g. ramipril, for hypertension) are contraindicated in pregnancy and may harm the developing foetus. High dose folic acid (5mg) is advised in the first trimester of pregnancy and should be taken for 3 months pre-conceptually (at a lower dose). Before conception it is vitally important that your blood glucose levels are controlled and your HbA1c is in range.

Please ensure you take adequate contraception until your blood glucose levels are on target. Please contact us for more advice if needed.