

What is diabetes?

Diabetes is a health condition where glucose is trapped in the bloodstream and cannot get to the cells used by the body for energy. This is often due to problems with the body's ability to produce insulin, which helps transfer glucose to cells.

Types

There are two main categories of diabetes. **Type 1** diabetes means the body can't produce insulin. Treatment is usually through regular insulin injections. **Type 2** diabetes means the body makes insulin that doesn't work properly, or that it can't make enough insulin. This can be treated through diet, physical exercise and tablets but insulin injections may be needed in time.

Typical symptoms

These include: Extreme tiredness, increased thirst, frequent urination, unexplained weight loss, blurred vision.

Risks

Being overweight

Age - the risk increases when you turn 40

Ethnicity - South Asian, Black Caribbean and Chinese people are more at risk.

Family history - having a close family member with type 2 diabetes increases your own risk

High blood pressure and cholesterol

Minimising your risk

Eat a well-balanced, nutritional diet

Take regular exercise

Get regular testing

If you do have diabetes, remember to take your medication! Even if you begin to feel better, you must keep taking your medication in order to remain healthy.

Contact:

Tindall Riley (Britannia) Limited, Regis House, 45 King William Street, London, EC4R 9AN
Email: healthwatch@triley.co.uk Tel: +44 (0)20 7407 3588 Fax: +44 (0)20 7403 3942
www.britanniapandi.com

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