

Session 2 - Taking Control of Your Diabetes (1)

15 minutes
(Slides 33-35)

Welcome and introduce new health professional

Feedback from previous session

Discuss

- Advantages/disadvantages of healthier lifestyles
- Barriers to reaching targets

(use flipchart & marker)

20 minutes
(Slide 36)

Blood sugar (glucose) testing

Find out how many of the group do this at home; find out levels of knowledge about this.

Depending on levels of knowledge:

- explain what blood sugar testing is
- explain the importance of this in reducing the chances of developing the complications of diabetes
- demonstrate how to do this at home
- explain when this should be done & levels before and after meals
- discuss the importance of learning how food, activity and medicines can affect blood sugar levels
- discuss difference between testing blood sugar at home and having HbA1c levels checked when you see your doctor/nurse

See additional notes

10 minutes
(Slide 37)

Blood pressure checks

Explain the importance of keeping blood pressure under control to reduce the chances of developing the complications of diabetes. Discuss ways of doing this e.g. healthy eating; physical activity; not smoking.

Discuss Blood pressure levels within the group (from personal record cards).

Discuss what the general target should be - 140/80 mmHg.

If appropriate discuss medicines to keep blood pressure under control.

Discuss how often blood pressure should be checked.

Looking after your feet

20 minutes

(Slides 38-39)

Input from podiatrist including demonstration -

- Why it's important to look after your feet
- how to look after your feet

See additional notes

minutes

Medication

15

(Slide 40)

Find out any medications taken by group.

Discuss importance of these medications and taking medicines at the correct time. Ask whether there are any questions about medicines taken. (Community pharmacist could do this session if available)

Tea break - if running session in the afternoon

Have tea, fruit juice and fruit for group.

Diabetes and your daily life

25 minutes

(Slides 41-50)

Discuss the following with the group:

Your family	Employment
Religion	Eating Out/Celebrations/Festivals
Travel	Smoking
Driving	Alcohol

Sexual Health - see additional notes

Your family

(Slide 42)

Get your family involved:

- Shopping for healthy foods
- Cooking healthy meals
- Doing physical activities with you e.g. going for walks
- Having the same healthy lifestyle as you
- Being interested in your diabetes
- Listening and talking to you about how you're feeling

Driving

(Slide 44)

You must tell your motor insurance company that you have diabetes.

If you take tablets or insulin you must, by law, tell the DVLA. You can write to them at:

DVLA
Swansea
SA99 1TU

Ask if there are any questions about driving.

Travel

(Slides 45-46)

Ask group about whether they ever travel abroad.

Discuss tips for travelling. Include the following:

- Keep to your usual meal, activity and medication routines as much as you can.
- Plan ahead for any changes to your meal times (when crossing time zones etc.)
- Keep your medicines and medical equipment with you when travelling
- Take extra medicines with you and prescriptions
- Keep food and some sort of sugar with you when travelling (biscuits, cereal bars, sandwiches, cartons of unsweetened fruit juice, glucose tablets, boiled sweets)
- Take a signed letter from your doctor with you explaining your treatment
- Know how to get emergency help in the country you are travelling to
- Money for the country you are going to so you can buy food and drink

Ask if there are any questions about travelling.

Further information is available in Diabetes UK 'Travel and Diabetes' booklet

Religion

(Slide 43)

Find out how many of the group fast for religious reasons. If some of the group do fast, then discuss fasting and looking after their diabetes.

Discuss

- Although people with diabetes may not be expected to fast we know that many of you will wish to fast. You should be able to fast safely as long as you talk to your doctor or nurse before you start your fast and agree a plan with them giving you advice on fasting; medicines and the end of the fast.
- If diabetes is treated by diet only, fasting should not cause any problems.
- If you take tablets you will need to check with your doctor or nurse about when to take your medicines and how much to take.
- At the end of the fast you may want to eat a lot of starchy food such as rice and have more sugary drinks. This will make your blood sugar rise so again talk to your doctor or nurse about what you should do.

Employment

(Slide 47)

Discuss employment with the group e.g. what jobs they have; any difficulties because of their diabetes. Ask if there is anything they would like to talk about. Use the following information if applicable:

Some jobs have blanket bans e.g. Airline Pilot; Jobs requiring a Large Goods Vehicle (LGV) or Passenger Carrying Vehicle (PCV) license; Fire Service; Police Service; Train driving; Working at heights; Armed Forces

At work – be prepared to treat a hypo at work; let colleagues know how they can help

Taking time off - Try to arrange medical appointments for the same morning; give good notice of any absences you know about; keep your employer informed; don't blame diabetes if you are off for any other reason; seek prompt medical attention.

Applying for jobs – if the application has a section about health write that you have diabetes. If there is no section on this, tell whoever interviews you at the end of the interview. Answer any queries about your diabetes honestly and positively. Show that you are in control of your diabetes.

Eating out, Special occasions & Festivals

(Slide 48)

At many festivals or special occasions a larger variety of foods will be available.

Discuss:

How often group eat out, go to special occasions or festivals.

Ask about the types of foods available.

Discuss ways of eating healthily even during these occasions.

Recommend that they talk to their dietitian about special occasions, festivals and eating out, if they want further advice about these occasions.

Alcohol	(Slide 49)
<p>If you drink alcohol keep to sensible limits</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Men - maximum 3 units a day • Women - maximum 2 units a day <p>Have at least 2 alcohol free days a week</p>	
Smoking	(Slide 50)
<p>Discuss risks of smoking & diabetes.</p> <p>Smoking:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • damages you blood vessels • increases your chances of a heart attack, stroke and damage to your feet or legs <p>Smoking and having diabetes increases the risk of the above by up to 4-9 times.</p> <p>Discuss benefits of giving up smoking. Arrange referrals to practice if applicable.</p>	
Sexual health - see additional notes	
Review of personal targets	5 minutes (Slide 51)
<p>Ask how group managed; set new/keep targets same targets for next session. Quick review of diaries, ask group to keep diaries for coming week and to bring to next session.</p>	
10 minutes (Slide 52)	
<p>Group discussion - anything they didn't understand; any further questions Suggestions for next session from group Date/time/venue for next week's session</p> <p>Physical activity - engage group in some form of physical activity e.g. music and dancing</p>	
Lunch - if running session in morning.	

Additional notes for session 2

1. Blood Sugar (Glucose) Testing

Explain to the group that keeping good control of blood sugar (glucose) levels and blood pressure (see below) greatly reduces the chances of developing the complications of diabetes.

Discuss the different types of testing:

- At home
- At the doctor's

At home

Explain that this gives an accurate picture of blood sugar at the time of the test.

Discuss how to do this - give a demonstration if possible.

Discuss when this should be done and how often.

Explain that the target is to have blood sugar (glucose) levels of:

- 4 - 7 mmol/l before meals
- Less than 8.5mmol/l after meals

Discuss the importance of learning how food, activity and medicines can affect your blood sugar (glucose).

Discuss getting occasional high or low results. Possible reasons include:

- Getting a high result after a hypo because you have eaten extra carbohydrate or glucose to treat it.
- Having an illness can affect the results.
- Extra physical activity can cause a low reading.
- Stress and hot weather can also affect the results.

However, if levels are consistently high or low you will need to talk to your doctor or nurse.

Discuss the importance of testing regularly even if all your tests are satisfactory over a long period of time and you are getting fed up doing it.

At the doctor's (HbA1c)

Explain that when you have a diabetes check up, a blood sample for the HbA1c is taken. This test is different to the one at home because it lets you know what your average blood sugar level has been over the past 3 months. A result of 7% or below is the target.

2. Looking after your feet

2.1 Why do I need to look after my feet?

Diabetes can cause damage to your feet and legs.

Spending a few minutes each day looking after your feet can help stop problems in the future.

2.2 How do I look after my feet?

There are 7 things you can do:

- Look at & feel your feet every day
- Wash your feet every day
- Be careful not to burn your feet
- Make sure your toenails are short
- Look out for corns and callous
- Check your shoes & socks before putting them on
- Don't smoke

2.2.1 Looking at and feeling your feet

Look at your feet to see if there are any:

- Cuts
- Scratches
- Swellings

Or to see if the skin looks:

- inflamed
- discoloured

If you can't see very well ask someone else to look for you.

Feel your feet for:

- lumps
- swellings
- hot or cold spots

What do I do if I find anything?

Contact your podiatrist or your doctor.

If it's a cut or a scratch keep this clean until you can see your podiatrist or doctor. Make sure you rinse it with water and put a plaster on.

2.2.2 Wash your feet every day

- use lukewarm water and mild soap
- dry your feet well but gently
- don't forget to dry between your toes
- put moisturising cream on your feet but not between your toes

2.2.3 Be careful not to burn your feet

Many people who have diabetes cannot feel heat, cold or pain very well in their feet.

Because of this you must be extra careful not to burn your feet.

- don't put your feet too near a fire or against a radiator
- always check how hot your bath is by using your elbow before you get in
- be careful using hot water bottles
- remember to turn off an electric blanket before going to sleep

2.2.4 Keeping your toenails short

- cut your toenails straight across
- don't cut or 'dig' into the corners of your nails

If you have any problems cutting your nails OR if there is reduced feeling or circulation in your feet ask your podiatrist for help.
If in doubt always ask for advice.

2.2.5 Corns and callous

Don't try to treat yourself.

Don't cut them.

Don't use corn remedies

Always ask your podiatrist to treat these

2.2.6 Check your shoes and socks before putting them on

Check your shoes and socks or stockings for damage every time you put them on. Remember any cracks, small stones, broken toenails can irritate and damage your skin.

What type of shoes should I wear?

Lace-ups, with soft uppers are a good choice.

Always make sure that any shoes you wear are a good fit and are roomy at the toes (this lets your foot muscles work properly and stops your foot rubbing).

Always get your feet measured when buying shoes.

Wear new shoes for 1-2 hours at first

2.2.7 Don't smoke

Smoking can make circulation problems worse.

Ask for advice and leaflets on how to stop smoking at your health centre.

3. Medication

Discuss whether anyone in the group is currently taking medication for diabetes.

For those who are not currently taking medicines for diabetes

Explain that diabetes is a progressive disease and that at some point they may be prescribed tablets/insulin for their diabetes. It is therefore important to talk about medicines with everyone in the group.

For those who are taking medicines:

Make sure group members understand the medicines they are taking.

Discuss how sometimes it can be difficult for someone to take all their tablets regularly. Reasons include

- remembering to take the tablets (give advice on ways to do this)
- not understanding how the tablets help (explain this)
- side effects (discuss)
- feeling unwell (discuss)

Discuss diabetes tablets and other medicines

What to do if you forget to take a tablet

What to do when you are unwell

Explain to everyone that tablets are not used instead of diet and physical activity - you still need to have a healthy diet and be physically active to take control of your diabetes.

Moving on to insulin

Explain that even if you have a healthy diet and take your diabetes tablets there may come a time when your diabetes control is not as good as it was and your doctor will recommend insulin. Again mention that it is a progressive disease and it will change over time. About 30% of people with Type 2 diabetes treat it with insulin injections.

Discuss feelings about this - feeling scared, feeling guilty that they hadn't controlled their diabetes better etc.

Discuss any concerns about using insulin and your religious beliefs or if you are a strict vegetarian. Most insulin prescribed today is genetically engineered 'human' insulin, which doesn't involve the use of any animal or human products. Tell group that they should raise any concerns about the type of insulin prescribed with the doctor who prescribes it.

4. Diabetes & your daily life

Sexual health - as this is a sensitive topic you may feel that it is not appropriate to discuss this in a group setting. Ensure that information about this is given to the group in leaflet form with details of a confidential contact for further advice and help.