

NEWS FROM NEEDS

September 2020

Flu jab

Winter conditions can be very bad for your health, especially if you're living with diabetes. That's why you really need to get your free flu jab (also known as the flu vaccine) before winter starts. Flu is serious and can make your blood sugar go all over the place. If your blood sugar isn't within target, the effects of flu can be dragged out and increase your risk of developing serious complications. Getting a flu jab will help you avoid this. With the current Covid pandemic, the risks may be higher - that's why you really need to get your free flu jab this year!

Diabetes UK have put some information together as part of Public Health England's 'Stay Well This Winter' campaign: <https://www.diabetes.org.uk/guide-to-diabetes/managing-your-diabetes/flu-jab>

NHS launch 'Better health' a range of tools and support to kickstart your health

Having a healthy lifestyle has always been a cornerstone of good diabetes management. Weight, activity levels and the types of food eaten can all directly or indirectly affect diabetes and other health risks. Following the pandemic, the government have made it clear that evidence shows obesity and poor lifestyle are related to worse Covid outcomes. Visit the Better Health website here: www.nhs.uk/better-health/

Here are some examples of what you can find on the Better Health website:

- Access to the free 12 week NHS weight loss programme
- Special discounted rates on commercial weight loss programmes (e.g. Weight Watchers and Slimming World)
- Access to free fitness apps such as NHS Fitness Studio, Couch to 5k, Active 10
- Apps to support health lifestyle e.g. Food scanner app, Easy Meal app, BMI calculator
- Information about the national diabetes prevention programme



Diabetes Information and Education Sessions

NEEDS are working hard to provide educational support to people with diabetes during these difficult times. When it is safe, we will begin to provide face to face education again. Until then, **we are delivering remote DAFNE sessions and a virtual Type 1 carbohydrate and insulin group session.** For those with Type 2 diabetes, we are offering 'Changing Health' (soon to change to 'My DESMOND') education which is an online education tool that covers similar topics to our previous face to face courses to support you to live well with your diabetes. As well as a virtual group session for people with type 2 diabetes on insulin and a virtual group session discussing the basics of type 2 diabetes and healthy lifestyles.

For more information and updates, please check the NEEDS website or call our admin team. We hope our participants enjoy the virtual courses and this becomes something we are eventually able to offer to people with diabetes alongside face to face options in post-Covid times.

A note for Freestyle Libre users:

If you are using Freestyle Libre please ensure you stop requesting and collecting as many of your standard finger blood testing strips on your repeat prescription. Finger strip testing is a huge expense to the local NHS and strips go out of date quickly so **please do not stock pile**.

NEEDS advise that you keep strips to hand to use:

- To check accuracy of Libre data at times of rapidly changing glucose (e.g. during a hypo)
- To use for driving if required (as per driving laws HGV etc.)
- For use in case of Libre failure
- To double check any unusual or unexpected Libre results
- Insulin pump users for accuracy
- If advised for individual reasons by your healthcare team

Your GP surgery will not remove items from your repeat prescription if you use less of them. Money saved on strips will be reinvested in the continuation of Freestyle Libre locally.

If you use standard blood glucose finger prick testing, your meter should be renewed every 2-3 years so please check at your annual review or contact your practice if your meter is older than this.

Did you know....

Your consultation and appointment letters are now available via encrypted email rather than post. If you want to help reduce paper waste and 'go green', please call/email our admin team or let us know next time you see us to arrange future communications via encrypted emails.



Diabetes and Covid-19 update:

If you have diabetes – regardless of what type you have – you are **no** more likely to catch coronavirus than anyone else. And the majority of people who do get coronavirus – whether they have diabetes or not – will have **mild symptoms** and don't need to go into hospital. The risk for someone with diabetes is mainly linked to the effect the illness may have on your blood sugar levels and risk of DKA (Diabetic Keto Acidosis).

More ways to kickstart your health

If you want to improve other aspects of your wellbeing, we have more great free tools to support you:



BMI Calculator
Check your body mass index (BMI).
[Check your BMI](#)



How Are You? quiz
Take this quiz for tips on looking after your health.
[Take the quiz](#)



Easy Meal app
Meal ideas, recipes, cooking tips.
[Download on the App Store](#) [GET IT ON Google Play](#)



Food Scanner app
Find out what's really in your food and drink.
[Download on the App Store](#) [GET IT ON Google Play](#)



Active 10 app
Track and build up your daily walks – start with 10 minutes every day!
[Download on the App Store](#) [GET IT ON Google Play](#)



Couch to 5K app
Running app for absolute beginners.
[Download on the App Store](#) [GET IT ON Google Play](#)

What can you do?

- Reduce your risk of getting coronavirus by following government guidance (social distance, face coverings and self-isolate when required).
- Reduce '**modifiable risk factors**' or things that are in your control to change:
 - Research shows high Body Mass Index (BMI) and being overweight are linked to many health problems such as heart disease, but also increase your risk of dying from coronavirus. **'There's never been a better time to start losing weight'**. Anything you can do to reduce your weight will help lower your risks.
 - High blood pressure also adds risk - less salt and alcohol, doing more physical activity, losing weight and stopping smoking can help.
 - Smoking makes it more likely that you will catch Covid-19 and more likely that you will get seriously ill or die from it. That's partly because smokers touch their face and mouth more, meaning that they can become infected more easily. Smoking also damages your lungs, therefore making you more vulnerable to severe illness from respiratory diseases including Covid-19.
 - Local 'Stop Smoking' service offered by **Provide Lifestyle**: Call: 0300 303 9988 Email: provide_essexlifestyles@nhs.net Opening Times: 8am - 7pm
 - Uncontrolled diabetes is linked with higher risk of death from Covid. Take your diabetes medications as prescribed, eat healthy, keep active and contact your healthcare team if your blood glucose levels are high and not improving.
- Be prepared - familiarise yourself with sick day rules, have adequate diabetes supplies and contact details for your healthcare team in case support is needed.
- Know your risk - certain factors are out of our control but being aware of these and seeking support to improve your diabetes control can help.

More information available online: https://www.diabetes.org.uk/about_us/news/coronavirus

Need to talk?

You might be feeling worried and anxious about coronavirus and how it might affect you or your family and friends. We know this might be a stressful time, so you may need support with how you're feeling.

Diabetes UK have some helpful information to help you cope with **stress and other emotions**, or you might like to call their **helpline** to talk it through with someone. They also have a useful coronavirus thread on their **online forum**, where members are sharing information and experiences so you might find answers to any more questions.

In the news 'Type 2 remission - shakes and meal replacements'

This is part of the ongoing research the 'DiRECT trial' which is showing promising signs of putting some newly diagnosed diabetes into remission via weight loss and lifestyle changes. This new project is a pilot being rolled out in 10 areas of the UK for people meeting the pilot study criteria. Once the 'real world' data from the trial is available the hope is the programme then may be available in the wider NHS. North East Essex NHS is not part of the pilot and is not currently able to offer this as a treatment option but weight loss in any form can increase chances of Type 2 remission (detail for support above re: better health) so in the meantime get healthy any way you can!

Contact Us

If you have any questions about the NEEDS service or any of the topics covered in this newsletter please contact us:

Telephone: 0345 2413313 or 01473 344930



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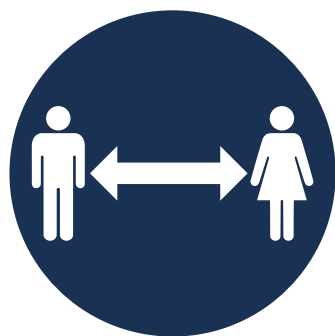
We must keep on protecting each other.



HANDS



FACE



SPACE