



**Wolverhampton
Diabetes Care**

Type 1 Diabetes

Diabetes mellitus is common. Diabetes affects about 1.4 million people in the UK – that's about 3 in every 100 people. There are approximately 12,000 people with diabetes in Wolverhampton. Of these people around 15% have type 1 diabetes.

Who does it affect?

Type 1 diabetes can occur at any age but predominantly arises in children and young adults but it can be seen at any age.

What is Type 1 diabetes?

Type 1 diabetes used to be known as insulin dependant diabetes mellitus. It develops when there is little or no production of insulin by the body. This happens because all of the cells that produce insulin in the pancreas have been inflamed, damaged and eventually destroyed. Without insulin, glucose cannot enter the cells where it is used by the body as a fuel and therefore levels in the blood rise.

What are the symptoms?

This type of diabetes comes on rapidly. Initial symptoms may include excessive thirst and a dry mouth, increased production of urine, extreme tiredness, infection or itching of the genitals, blurred vision and weight loss. Because Type 1 diabetes can worsen quickly, there can be additional symptoms such as vomiting, stomach pain and rapid breathing. Left untreated this can lead to a form of coma called diabetic ketoacidosis in which some of the body's acids have built up without control. This can be very serious and even life threatening. That's why Type 1 diabetes requires prompt treatment with insulin right from the beginning.

What causes Type 1 diabetes?

Type 1 diabetes is caused by the destruction of insulin producing cells, called the beta cells, which are found in special parts of the pancreas – the Islets of Langerhans. It is not clear what sparks off the damaged. The reaction may be triggered by a virus. Once started, there is an abnormal antibody reaction by the body to its own cells. This self damage is called an auto-immune reaction.

How is Type 1 diabetes treated?

Although it cannot be cured, Type 1 diabetes can be effectively treated with insulin injections and a healthy diet, exercise and weight control plan. Insulin cannot be taken in the form of a tablet because it would be destroyed by acids in the stomach. There are many types of insulin and different ways of taking Insulin injections. This should be fully explained to you by your specialist diabetes team who will help you get the best plan to fit in with your lifestyle and train you to be self caring in most aspects of insulin treatment.

Seeking advice and what care to expect

If you think you might have diabetes, don't just sit and worry about it. Go and see your doctor. A simple blood test will give the answer. If you find you have diabetes, you can expect to get lots of advice and help, as well as prompt treatment. You should soon be feeling back to good health.

If you have Type 1 diabetes you will most likely be under specialist care with a hospital diabetes team but many GP teams are happy to look after this type of diabetes. Be clear who is responsible for providing your care.

You should come to feel that you have a full understanding of your diabetes and its treatment and that you feel in charge and in control of your own condition.

Your diabetes care providers should offer you full support, training and education to be able to achieve this.

Your correct treatment plan should be discussed with you by your health care team at most visits and any concerns or worries answered for you. If your control is poor always ask if your treatment needs to be altered in any way.