

# DIABETES

Dr David C F Wright

It is said by many, including some medical staff, that diabetes is caused by being overweight or obese, and also by lack of exercise. Therefore, this disease is said to be self-inflicted and entirely the patients fault.

Many people bang on and on and on about this. If people would lose weight and engage in regular and profitable exercise they would not contract diabetes.

That is complete and utter rubbish as well as being grossly offensive because it is not right, and therefore, being wrong, it is a moral issue.

Diabetes can be caused by stress and the Labour party caused great stress to thousands of people. Other governments have as well. Existing diabetics have had their illness deteriorate because of stress.

Stress is often caused by circumstances beyond our control and by the aggravation caused by other people and government policies.

Dawn is five years old and is a type 1 diabetic. She is not overweight and is an active child.

Keith is 75, thin as a rake, slightly underweight and is very active with bike rides, walks, canoeing and is always on the go. Yet he is a diabetic.

He has recently been told by the medical profession that his blood-glucose reading of 8 is acceptable for a man of his age.

He has always been active and never been overweight.

David was 13 stone, the right weight for his height and frame. Then he had TIA's, mini strokes, and was put on heart medication which he will have to take for the rest of his life. He was the right weight before his heart trouble and now, twenty years later, he is now about 17 stone 11 pounds, an increase of almost 5 stone in 20 years. It is due to his medication since he is certainly not a lazy slob or a glutton!

The medical profession does not like to admit that drugs put on weight, but they certainly do, particularly steroids.

The older you get the more likely you are to put on weight and to lose weight is difficult.

Drugs for chronic conditions taken over a period of time will increase your weight substantially. Medication for high blood pressure and diabetic medication does put on weight and in some cases ten pounds a month but, to come off this medication, can have serious consequences.

Type 1 diabetes is when the body's immune system attacks and destroys the cells that produces insulin and leads to increasing blood-glucose levels which can damage the organs in the body.

Type 2 diabetes is when the body does not produce enough insulin to maintain a normal blood glucose level, or when the body is unable to effectively use the insulin being produced.

Type 1 diabetics are usually prescribed insulin and type 2 diabetics seek to control the condition with diet.

This is complicated by the differing views as to what can be eaten. The expression that you can eat anything in moderation is a foolish remark. What is moderation?

Some say that bananas should be eaten. Other medical people say that they must not be eaten and be avoided like the plague.

Some patients have a stomach reaction to some foods which are usually said should be avoided by diabetics. Ice cream, chocolate, pastry and block cheese are some examples. While we are told not to have sugar, sugar appears in almost everything including mustard and OXO cubes and when we buy drinks without containing sugar, we must realise they may be full of sweeteners. But sweeteners can raise the blood glucose levels considerably in many sufferers.

So-called diabetic chocolate has produced serious diarrhoea in patients. The Linda McCartney healthy foods have caused endless problems for diabetics.

Several diabetics said that after sexual activity, they had stomach upsets and increased urine frequency.

Apart from reaction to medication, there is a chronic condition known as diabetic diarrhoea or diabetic neuropathy which can be accompanied by the inability to control bowel movements. It may be due to problems with the pancreas leading to poor absorption of nutrients. (The pancreas produces insulin). It can lead to numbness, pain and weakness in the hands, arms, feet and legs. It can be aggravated by high blood-glucose levels, blood pressure, high levels of fat in the blood, being overweight and being over 40 years of age.

About 60% of patients who are prescribed Metformin have stomach upsets and abdominal cramps although some of them may only endure this only in the first stages of taking this drug and then get used to it. Some find Glucophage far better. Those who persevere with Metformin may continue to have stomach upsets.

The older one gets one finds that certain foods, once enjoyed, no longer agree with you and can cause stomach upsets.

Too much sugar can cause excessive urination and tests will show too much sugar in the urine sample. Too much protein in your water may indicate poor kidney function.

Having said all this, there are people who have diabetes because they eat unwisely and do not exercise, but that must not be generalised and said of all diabetes. There are thousands of diabetics who are underweight and very active. On the other hand, many children are said to be obese because of their intake of junk food.

It has been suggested that in a few years time 80% of people in Britain will have diabetes.

We are being conned. There is a lot of scholarly research that proves that healthy food is not good for you. We are being conned!

People do make wrong judgements

I have heard people say that all bachelors must be gay. That is as wrong as saying that all diabetics eat junk and unhealthy food and sit on their backsides all day watching television being fat and lazy slobs.

While one must not be sedentary, there is a danger in exercise. I have known several men who were keen on fitness and followed approved fitness regulations who have consequently died young from heart trouble and who certainly were not overweight.

Some people become overweight, but this is not due to diet or lack of exercise. It may be hereditary or glandular or because of the medication they are on. To suggest that they are diabetic because they are fat and lazy is unkind and not right, and, therefore, morally wrong.

We still make unkind and inaccurate judgements. Here is a young woman who always dresses with low tops and short skirts. Many say she is a slut or a prostitute, but that may be completely wrong.

As a retired schoolteacher, I can tell you that many girls go through this fashion phase, which does not usually last, and there is no evidence of promiscuity on their part.

One of the main problems with diabetes is that the blood glucose levels change quickly during the day. I have known people's readings vary in a day from 5 to 19. What is also disconcerting is that even with eating the right foods and exercising, the levels can still be high.

The sufferer cannot account for this and neither can the medical profession adequately explain this.

Some medical staff rant at you, "You are not controlling your diabetes!" – to which you reply, "I am doing all that is required!" – but the following retort may also be unkind.

We are very often given the idea that our diabetes is 100% our fault and that is not controlled is also exclusively our fault.

High levels are more likely to be because the medication is not working, or you need a change of medication or an increased dosage.

Eye tests are essential and they include retinal screening. Visits to a podiatrist regularly are also important and diabetics must ask him to examine your feet for any abrasions and the like. A regular claudication test by the podiatrist is recommended since this determines whether there is any dilating of the arteries or, to put into common parlance, any furring of the tubes.

There are those who say, "I have diabetes. There is no cure for it. I have to live with it. There is little or nothing I can do about it so I'll eat whatever I like and try to live a normal life!"

There are some diabetes who have no real troubles with this condition.

Other sufferers get fed up and annoyed at the aggressive attitude of medical staff as already indicated, and there are medical staff who have no sympathy, diplomacy or social skills.

However, they must not be snubbed.

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