

Diagnosis and prevention of Type 2 Diabetes



Dr Evans has produced an important article for doctors and patients. It summarises the different types of diabetes and describes how doctors can pick out patients with diabetes as well as those in danger of getting it, and what can be done to prevent or delay diabetes.

In Britain, about two and a half million people have diabetes. It increases their chances of heart and circulation diseases (about three quarters of people with diabetes die of these problems).

The major threat is type 2 diabetes, which tends to affect people over 40 years of age. People with diabetes will early on tend to need to pee a lot, drink a lot, lose weight, feel tired, have blurred vision and get infections easily. It may get worse. Later nerves may be damaged leading to a variety of unpleasant and damaging, heart and circulation problems. Then life may become very restricted.

Before diabetes

Diabetes does not just happen. Phil Evans shows that people who might otherwise be on the way to diabetes can be helped to either not get the disease or to delay getting it.

He argues that doctors should look for those at risk and that people at risk can be helped. The main thing the doctor can do is encourage people to help themselves. We all really know what to do. Drink less alcohol, give up smoking, following a sensible diet and getting a little more exercise. Even a 5% fall in weight and 4 hours of moderate exercise a week can reduce the chances of getting diabetes. Drugs to support patients at risk are not of great use here and no substitute for exercise and diet management.

So there are messages to doctors and to patients. Doctors need to be alert to the dangers and to offer help to people who are at risk of type 2 diabetes.

All the rest of us need to do is take the advice that is given.

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