

## SOME COMMON MISTAKEN IDEAS ABOUT DIABETES

### About the diagnosis of diabetes

#### **“I’ve got a little bit of sugar, but I’m not diabetic”**

You don’t have a little or a lot of sugar. Whether you have diabetes or not depends on scientifically established blood glucose levels.

#### **“As I don’t inject myself with insulin, I’m not diabetic”**

People with diabetes can be treated by means of their diet alone or by taking tablets and/or insulin as well.

#### **“I don’t inject myself with insulin, I’ve got the good type of diabetes”**

All types of diabetes, whether they need insulin or not, require appropriate treatment. Whatever the type of diabetes, a permanently high level of glucose means that there is a risk of complications in the long term. There are no good or bad types of diabetes, just diabetes that is or is not properly controlled.

#### **“They found I had high blood sugar, but I’m all right now”**

Once diabetes has been diagnosed, blood sugar levels can be brought back to normal by treatment. But strictly speaking, even when this happens diabetes has not been cured, although it can be perfectly well kept under control.

### About the treatment for diabetes

#### **“The diet is monotonous and boring”**

The food a person who has diabetes, but is not overweight, can eat is as varied as they like to make it, provided they know how to use the equivalences between different food groups. In the case of those who are overweight, the need to restrict calorie intake does certainly impose some limitations on what they can eat.

#### **“Special foods for diabetics - I can eat whatever I like”**

Even though they are called permitted, tolerated or special foods for diabetics, this does not mean they can be eaten without any limits. You must read what is on the labels carefully and follow expert advice.

#### **“If I inject myself with insulin, I don’t need to bother about my diet”**

Your diet plan is part of your treatment and neither pills nor insulin can take its place.

#### **“I mustn’t eat pulses, bread, melon, etc. because I’ve got diabetes “**

There are no forbidden foods, but you must adapt the amounts to your recommended diet plan.

#### **“As I’m going to eat more, I’ll take more pills”**

You must not change the medicine you take for diabetes arbitrarily. It should only be changed in response to test results. Taking the wrong dose can trigger disorders.



# Diabetes Education

## **“With insulin I’ll go blind”**

The insulin with which patients inject themselves is identical to that produced by the pancreas. Thanks to it many people survive and others live better, and the risk of chronic complications is reduced.

## About the complications of diabetes

### **“When my blood sugar level is low, I take advantage and stuff myself “**

About 15 to 20 grams of sugar is almost always enough to deal with an episode of hypoglycaemia (low blood sugar level). Taking larger amounts usually leads to problems later on.

### **“If I keep my sugar under control, my blood pressure and weight are not important”**

#### **“Smoking has got nothing to do with diabetes”**

Diabetes implies a risk of cardiovascular (heart and blood vessel) disease. Smoking, high blood pressure, high cholesterol and obesity can increase this risk.

### **“If my blood sugar is normal when I get up, then I’ve got my diabetes well under control”**

Having it well under control means having blood sugar levels near normal throughout the whole day.

### **“I feel better when my sugar level is high than when it is low”**

Many people feel like this, but you must remember that high blood sugar acts silently while it increases the risk of chronic complications.



Remember: if you have any doubts or queries, ask your doctor or nurse