

### Where can I get more information?

You can ask your diabetes team about the Clinical Psychologists.

Or, you could contact the team at:

**Phone:** 01803 655579

### Postal address:

Paediatric Diabetes Specialist Nurse  
First Floor, The Embankment  
Torbay Hospital  
Lawes Bridge  
Torquay  
TQ2 7AA



**PATIENT INFORMATION**



**A booklet for teens with diabetes**

## Who can I talk to?



Your diabetes team who can talk with you about the practical bits of managing diabetes, like exercise, food, managing at school, clubs and sleepovers,. If you are struggling with any of the issues in this booklet, you can talk to your diabetes team who can advise or point you in the right direction. Your diabetes team consists of doctors, specialist nurses, dietitians and the clinical psychologist.

Family or a friend – it's always good to have someone to talk to about having diabetes, and even sometimes just to be able to say that you're fed up.



Clinical Psychologist – if you are struggling with your feelings about diabetes, you could talk to the team Clinical Psychologist.

School teacher – if things happening at school are affecting how you manage your diabetes or how you feel about your diabetes.

## What do the Clinical Psychologists do?

The Clinical Psychologists can help you to explore your feelings associated with your diagnosis of diabetes. For example, you may be feeling depressed or worried about it, fed-up or alone. They could also help you to think about different strategies to help you cope more with the diagnosis. If you think that it may be helpful to talk to a team psychologist, please contact your diabetes team, who can make a referral for you.

## Helpful websites

**Network website with a South West and a National families page**

[www.CYPDiabetesNetwork.nhs.uk](http://www.CYPDiabetesNetwork.nhs.uk)

**Diabetes forums:**

[www.diabetes.co.uk](http://www.diabetes.co.uk)

[www.upbete.co.uk](http://www.upbete.co.uk)

**Videos of other young people talking about their experiences of diabetes:**

<http://healthtalkonline.org/young-peoples-experiences/diabetes-type-1/topics>

**Website for young people with diabetes:**

<http://www.jdrft1.org.uk/>

**Website with relaxation ideas and tips**

<http://www.getselfhelp.co.uk/relax.htm>

\*\*\*Please note that we cannot endorse any advice given by individuals on any forums. Please use your common sense or ask a parent or professional before following any advice given.




**I'm fed up with my diabetes**

**Diabetes burnout**, where you are fed up with diabetes and everything about it, is a common feeling and *you are definitely not alone!*

It can be helpful to tell someone such as a friend or family member so that they can try and support you. Talking to your diabetes team may also help to motivate you as they are there to help too!

It can be important to engage with activities that you enjoy so that life does not feel like it is all about having diabetes. Take some time out to 'chill', watching a film or spending time with your mates can all be helpful. Relaxation techniques can help some people feel calmer when you are feeling frustrated or fed-up with diabetes.

It can be important to think about what makes you who you are, such as your family, your friends, things you like, things you're good at, things you do in your spare time and your hopes and dreams for the future. It might help to write them down, to see that the diabetes certainly does not define who you are.



**I am fed up with my  
parents going on at  
me**

Sometimes it can feel like all they do is nag you about your diabetes. This can be really annoying, and even knowing it is because they care sometimes does not help. If you were diagnosed when you were younger, it can be hard for parents as they may have become used to managing your diabetes and so may worry about you taking responsibility. Having open conversations about this can help you to both have a deeper understanding of each other's views and together you could agree on (for example) how you will ask for more help if you need too (e.g. during exam time, having reminders) or which parts of your management you would like to take more responsibility for.

If you think talking to them might be hard, try writing down your feelings, or talk to another relative who might be able to talk to them with you. You might want to make a list of all the things you are doing at the moment for your diabetes management, and for your own care generally. You could 'star' the ones where you are struggling or where you feel you want a bit of help from your parents, and also highlight where you feel you could take on more responsibility or think you are doing enough. You could use this list to start a conversation with your parents.

Sometimes, starting conversations with them yourself can help them realise that you are able to talk about it responsibly whether you want more independence, or more help or you want something to change. You could agree to have set times once or twice a week to go over levels etc.




**I am angry that I  
have diabetes**

It is ok and perfectly normal to sometimes feel angry about having diabetes. It is not something you would choose for yourself, and it can seem really unfair that you have this diagnosis. Remember it is also not your fault, nor anyone else's – even the scientists cannot say who will and will not develop diabetes.

It can be helpful to express how you feel. If you do not feel able to talk to someone, maybe you could use activities like art, music, or punching a pillow.

Relaxation exercises may help to reduce some of the tension. There are some websites listed in this booklet which illustrate different relaxation techniques that you could try. Some of our teenagers have listed their relaxation ideas on page 5.

It can be helpful to remember that by giving enough time to managing your condition, you will be able to spend more time on other fun activities. Also by doing this you are more likely to feel in control, rather than feeling that it controls you.




**I worry about what people think of me**

Do you feel people look at you curiously if you have to test your bloods or inject in public places? Although this may be an understandable perception, it can be difficult to interpret other people's body language. Do you believe that people have started treating you differently since you have had this diagnosis of diabetes? This could be teachers, family, friends, or other people you are in contact with. People can often be worried that they might say the wrong thing, or because they do not understand diabetes they may be afraid that you will become poorly and they will not know what to do. You can decide who to tell and what you would like to tell others about your diabetes.

Others may not even be aware that you have diabetes because it is not obvious all of the time. This could sometimes be helpful as people will see you for the person you are and not just diabetes, but also not helpful as they may struggle to understand or believe the symptoms you experience.

It could possibly be helpful to surround yourself with people who are willing to learn about your diabetes and who want to support you. If you think/suspect that people you don't know are making assumptions about you, you could ask yourself whether it is any of their business!




**I feel bad for not keeping good control**

**Be kind to yourself** – Having diabetes is hard at any age for many reasons; however during the teenage years you have other stresses such as friendships/relationships, the impact of hormones on levels and exams. This combined with the burden of diabetes management can make life feel much more difficult and thus make it much harder to achieve and maintain control as well as you (and others) might like it to be.

Try to be open and honest with your diabetes team. They will have some understanding of how hard it can be especially at this time, and will offer support and guidance to help you make better choices about managing your diabetes. If you have a bad day or few days (or longer), or your readings are not what you want them to be, your Team are still there to support you, and will not judge you. Please try to stay in contact.

It can be easy to focus on the stuff you are struggling with – but do not forget the things you are doing well. Try to 'notice' at least one positive thing that has happened each day; examples could be teachers telling you that you have done a piece of school work really well or making a friend laugh to cheer them up. Even helping someone else can make you feel good.




**I feel alone and different –  
no one else understands**

It can be hard for others to understand what is really going on for you. It can be helpful to **talk it through with someone who cares about you and would like to be there for you**. It may be helpful to have a look at the diabetes forums to talk to other young people with diabetes. It is possible that you will find someone else who is going through a similar experience.

If you find it hard to talk, maybe write a diary or use drawings to show how you feel. You do not have to share this if you do not want to – sometimes it just helps being able to release your feelings.

Having diabetes is not the only thing that defines you as a person. Regardless of the diabetes you will most probably find that you have lots of things in common with your friends and lots of things that make you all unique and different (e.g. hair/eye colour, pets etc.).

**We are all ‘individual’ and it is OK to be ‘different’.**



**I am worried  
about bullying**

Bullying can be experienced at any age and is often a result of the perpetrator being ignorant, insecure or ill informed. Bullying is always wrong and should never be ignored.

Telling somebody is vital; **please do not keep it to yourself**. You could tell a school teacher, a family member and/or a friend. Keep a record of the bullying, like a diary, with what happened and when. If it occurs at school, a teacher should always ensure to talk to/discipline the perpetrator so the behaviour stops. If it does not, please keep letting your teachers and family know so they can deal with it in a different way. It may also help to talk to somebody, to express your feelings about how it has affected you, and to talk through some coping strategies which may be helpful. Secondary schools often have a school counsellor who you could talk too. Remember bullying **always says more about the bully than it does about you**.

For more information on bullying, or to talk to someone in confidence, visit the **Bullying UK website**:

[www.bullying.co.uk/](http://www.bullying.co.uk/)

Or the **ChildLine bullying website**:

[www.childline.org.uk/explore/bullying/pages/bullying.asp](http://www.childline.org.uk/explore/bullying/pages/bullying.asp)

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For ways to **keep yourself safe from bullies**, go to:

[www.kidscape.org.uk/young-people/protect-yourself/](http://www.kidscape.org.uk/young-people/protect-yourself/)