

Patient-education models for diabetes

Understanding NICE guidance –
information for people with diabetes,
and the public

April 2003



Corporate member of
Plain English Campaign.
Committed to clearer communication.

197

Patient-education models for diabetes

Understanding NICE guidance – information for people with diabetes and the public

Issue date: April 2003

To order copies

Copies of this booklet can be ordered from the NHS Response Line; telephone 0870 1555 455 and quote reference number N0215. A version in Welsh and English is also available, reference number N0216. Mae fersiwn yn Gymraeg ac yn Saesneg ar gael hefyd, rhif cyfeirnod N0216. The NICE technology appraisal on which this information is based, *Guidance on the use of patient-education models for diabetes*, is available from the NICE website (www.nice.org.uk). Copies can also be obtained from the NHS Response Line, reference number N0213.

National Institute for Clinical Excellence

MidCity Place
71 High Holborn
London
WC1V 6NA

Web: www.nice.org.uk

ISBN: 1-84257-289-X

Published by the National Institute for Clinical Excellence

April 2003

Icon Design

ABBA Litho

© National Institute for Clinical Excellence April 2003. All rights reserved. This material may be freely reproduced for educational and not for profit purposes within the NHS. No reproduction by or for commercial organisations is permitted without the express written permission of the Institute.

Contents

What is NICE guidance?	4
What is diabetes?	5
What are patient-models for diabetes?	6
What has NICE recommended?	7
What should I do?	8
Will NICE review its guidance?	8
Further information	9

What is NICE guidance?

The National Institute for Clinical Excellence (NICE) is part of the NHS. It produces guidance for both the NHS and patients on the use of medicines, medical equipment, diagnostic tests and clinical and surgical procedures and under what circumstances they should be used.

To produce this guidance, NICE looks at how well the medicine, equipment or procedure works and also how well it works in relation to how much it costs. This process is called an appraisal. The appraisal process involves the manufacturer of the medicine or equipment for which guidance is being produced and the organisations that represent the healthcare professionals, patients and carers who will be affected by the guidance. Each appraisal takes about 12 months to complete.

NICE was asked to look at the available evidence on patient-education models for diabetes, which are designed to help people with diabetes manage their condition from day to day. NICE was asked to provide guidance that will help the NHS in England and Wales decide whether such patient-education models should be used.

What is diabetes?

Diabetes is a condition in which the body does not produce enough insulin, or produces insulin but can't use it properly. Insulin is a substance that controls the amount of glucose (sugar) in the blood. If there isn't enough insulin or it isn't having the proper effect, the level of glucose in the blood increases and this can have harmful effects. There are two types of diabetes: type 1 and type 2.

Type 1 diabetes occurs when there is a severe lack of insulin in the body because most or all of the insulin-producing cells in the pancreas (the organ that produces insulin) have been destroyed. This type of diabetes usually appears in people aged under 40, often during childhood. People with type 1 diabetes need daily insulin injections and also have to be careful about their diet.

Type 2 diabetes develops when the pancreas can make some, but not enough, insulin or the insulin doesn't work properly (this is also known as insulin resistance). This type of diabetes usually appears in people over the age of 40. People with type 2 diabetes usually start to manage their glucose levels by making changes to their diet and lifestyle. But many people with type 2 diabetes eventually have to start taking one or more medicines and may need to use insulin.

What are patient-education models for diabetes?

People with diabetes have to make sure their condition is properly managed all the time. This is true, whether or not they are using insulin or glucose-lowering medicines. So they need to understand diabetes and know how to treat it. This includes knowing about the effect of lifestyle, including diet and exercise, on their condition, and when relevant the way insulin is used. Educating people with diabetes about their condition and its treatment helps them to manage it better and more conveniently, and so helps them to avoid other health problems related to diabetes and to lead fuller, more enjoyable lives.

The DAFNE (short for Dose Adjustment For Normal Eating) training course is one example of a patient-education model for people with type 1 diabetes. A DAFNE course lasts 5 days and teaches groups of people to tailor their insulin doses according to the amount of starchy foods they eat and their lifestyle. DAFNE is a 'structured' programme. A 'structured' programme is one that is planned and that covers all the important topics and can also be adapted to each person's needs, education and culture.

What has NICE recommended?

NICE has recommended that all people with diabetes should be offered structured education, provided by a trained specialist team of health professionals. NICE considers the team should include a diabetes specialist nurse (or a GP practice nurse who has experience in diabetes) and a dietitian (someone who can give specialist advice on diet). Other health professionals should join the team if needed.

Education about diabetes should start when people are first told they have the condition and should then become part of their long-term routine care.

NICE concluded that there was not enough evidence available to make recommendations about specific types of education. But NICE does offer the following general advice.

- People with diabetes generally should be taught in groups, although one-to-one teaching should also be available.
- Teaching sessions should use a variety of different methods to help people learn.

- Educational programmes should meet the needs of the broadest possible range of people with diabetes. People from different cultures and ethnic groups, and those who have disabilities or who live in more remote areas, all need to be considered. Sessions could take place either in the community or at a local diabetes centre.

The Dose Adjustment for Normal Eating (DAFNE) course may be one suitable education programme for people with type 1 diabetes.

What should I do?

If you or someone you care for has diabetes, you should discuss this guidance with your doctor.

Will NICE review its guidance?

Yes. The guidance will be reviewed in February 2006.

Further information

The NICE website (www.nice.org.uk) has further information about NICE and the full guidance on patient-education models for diabetes that has been issued to the NHS. The guidance can also be requested from the NHS Response Line by phoning 0870 1555 455 and quoting reference N0213. If you would like to read the NICE guidance on patient-education models for diabetes, you can request it from the NHS Response Line by quoting reference N0215 for the patient version.

If you have access to the Internet, you can find more information about diabetes on the NHS Direct website (www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk). You can also phone NHS Direct on 08 45 46 47.



***National Institute for
Clinical Excellence***

**National Institute for
Clinical Excellence**

MidCity Place
71 High Holborn
London
WC1V 6NA

www.nice.org.uk