

May 2021

SHEFFIELD GROUP  
**News** 

**DiABETES UK**  
KNOW DIABETES. FIGHT DIABETES.

In this edition:

- **Eye Screening**
- **Mental Health Awareness Week**
- **Safe Fasting**  
during Ramadan

**New packed edition!**  
Just one click on the links for more information!



Plus

**Tech & Education**

The best apps for diabetes

and much more...

**Easy Fundraising**

Free support for Diabetes UK

**Phone Survey**

How was it for you?

# Eye Screening

This month we chatted to Daniel Allsopp and Yasmeen Abbas to find out more about diabetic eye screening.

## Tell us about you and the diabetic eye screening team.

We are Retinal Screeners and work for the Sheffield Diabetic Eye Screening Service. Along with our team of 13 Retinal Screeners, we deliver around 26,000 screening appointments a year in Sheffield. We have a brilliant administration team who book all the appointments and make sure results get delivered on time. We also have a great clinical team based in the Eye Clinic at the Royal Hallamshire Hospital who provide treatment and monitoring of people with diabetic retinopathy.

## How do you become a Retinal Screener?

All Retinal Screeners in England have to complete a Level 3 Diploma for Health Screeners which makes sure we have the right skills and knowledge to deliver retinal

screening to the population. A lot of the skills are learned on the job, such as how to use a retinal camera, which is a bit like driving a car – takes a while to learn but then becomes second nature!

## What is diabetic eye screening and why is it important?

It is an effective test for anyone from the age of 12 with a current or past diagnosis of diabetes. We take photographs of the back of the eye (the

retina) to check that the blood vessels look healthy. These blood vessels can become damaged through diabetes. If this damage is not treated, it can cause problems with vision. There are often no symptoms when this damage develops so it is vital to attend screening so that a referral to the eye clinic can be made at the right time to prevent any sight loss. Sight loss due to diabetes is still an important issue today and the screening programme is very good at reducing the number of people affected by it.

## What challenges do you face in promoting diabetic eye screening?

As you know, diabetes affects a lot of people. In Sheffield alone, we have over 33,000 people registered with the eye screening programme. This number is rising with over 2000 people newly diagnosed with diabetes every year in



Daniel Allsopp



Yasmeen Abbas

Sheffield. Most attend every time, but some people find it very difficult, for example if they're anxious about the screening test, find it difficult to get time off work or feel that their vision is fine so don't see the need to attend. We work very hard to try and raise awareness and would like to encourage everyone registered with us to make sure they attend each and every time we invite them for screening. We have daytime and evening appointments, and run clinics most Saturdays. Our helpful and friendly team are only a phone call away if anyone needs to discuss any concerns.

## Has the pandemic affected how you work?

Our Retinal Screeners are all now required to wear PPE during screening appointments, and due to social distancing measures put in place in GP surgery waiting rooms we are only able to run clinics in a limited number of locations in Sheffield. We also have to space out our appointment times, which means we can't currently see as many people as we did pre-COVID. Quite a few people who attend for screening are wary of visiting a GP surgery or Hospital, which is understandable, however our team has worked very hard to provide a clean and safe space to deliver diabetic eye screening to all those who need it.

**The Sheffield Diabetic Eye Screening Service telephone number is 0114 226 5475.**

# Hypo-Metrics

**Do you live with Type 2? Take insulin? Had a hypo in the last month? Interested in research?**

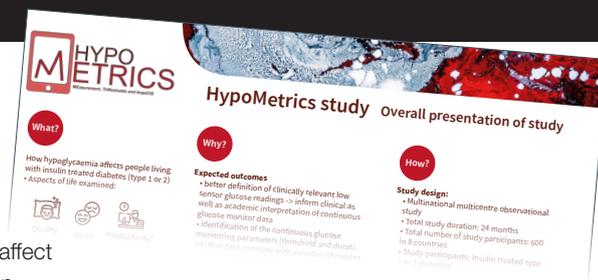
Local NHS researchers want to study how low blood sugars (hypos) affect people with Type 2 who are on insulin.

It'll involve using a Fitbit and wearing a blood glucose monitor for 10 weeks and visiting the hospital 3 times in one year.

They'll pay reasonable travel expenses and offer a shopping voucher after the 10 weeks of wearing the monitor and Fitbit, and if you like, you can keep the Fitbit.

The research will look at how hypos affect different aspects of life including sleep, mood, and work, and whether being able to recognise hypos makes any difference to this.

To find out more information and register your interest to take part please contact: **Sue Hudson, Diabetes Research Nurse on [susan.hudson3@nhs.net](mailto:susan.hudson3@nhs.net) or ring 0114 271 5372.**



And if you want to know, Hypo-Metrics stands for:

**Hypo** – hypoglycaemia (low blood sugar)

**ME** – measurement

**TR** – thresholds

**ICS** - impacts



**National Walking Month May 2021**

To celebrate we will be creating a short video of scenic views from around the North of England. To get involved please **send us** a photo or short clip of your best view from your dialy walks, before 18th May 2021.

# The value of TECH & EDUCATION

and the best apps for all types of diabetes



Winner of a Diabetes UK award for work on online DAINE

**Dr Jackie Elliott,**  
NHS Sheffield,  
Diabetes Tech Lead



**Kamil Armacki,**  
@Nerdabetic,  
Diabetes Tech Expert

## Don't miss our RAFFLE

This month's prizes are:



Ticket only  
**50p**



Raffle Prize Winners from April are:

1. Shirley Sherwood
2. Kerry France
3. Wendy Stammers
4. Dennis Anderson
5. Vanessa Vahey

Free  
Book on  
**eventbrite**  
here!

Join us on  
**Thursday 20th May,**  
**7pm**

Tickets are available online at Eventbrite or by post. Send cheque payable to **Sheffield Diabetes UK, c/o Treasurer, 43 Wostenholm Road, Sheffield, S7 1LB**

### TYPE 2 DIABETES REMISSION COULD IMPROVE HEART HEALTH

Ground-breaking research we've funded shows that some people can put their type 2 diabetes into remission using a low-calorie diet weight management programme. By being in remission, your blood sugar levels are in a healthy range.

At the moment, we don't have enough evidence to be sure if being in remission protects against complications, so Prof Roy Taylor and his team wanted to find out more!

Twenty-nine people with type 2 diabetes went on a low-calorie diet for 8 weeks. Their risk of having a heart attack or stroke over the next 10 years was assessed using a risk calculator.

Six months after the low-calorie diet everyone had lost weight and shed internal body fat, and this lowered their risk of heart disease!

But the risk was reduced even more for people who had put their type 2 diabetes into remission compared to those who hadn't.

There's still more we need to know about how much remission can protect against diabetes complications though...

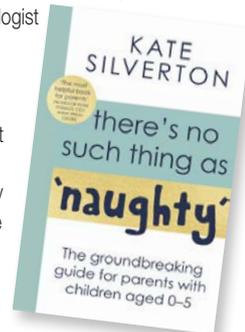
That's why it's so important to keep on getting regular health checks, even when you are in remission to make sure that any complications can be monitored and treated.

This gives us early evidence that being in remission could help to protect against heart attacks and strokes later in life! Findings also show that weight loss alone is really beneficial too, even without remission.

RESEARCH PRESENTED AT #DUKPC2021

## Hot off the press!

Our March meeting was all about Motivation with Diabetes Psychology colleagues Dr Zina Muffin and Charlotte Bentham. Now BBC newsreader, Strictly Star, journalist and trainee psychologist Kate Silverton has written a book which describes the model which Zina and Charlotte showed us, in relation to children. It sounds great and while not aimed at people living with diabetes may be a really helpful way to understand our little children, and be even more useful if they (or we) have diabetes!



# Mental Health Awareness Week

**COVID-19 has affected all of us; for almost everyone, life has had to change fundamentally. Research shows that since the start of the pandemic there has been an increase in a range of mental health conditions for adults, from a low sense of wellbeing, sleep problems and anxiety, to depression.**

There are things we can all do to look after our mental wellbeing. The Every Mind Matters website can get you started with a free NHS plan, showing you simple steps

to help manage anxiety, sleep better and boost your mood. Here's a link to the Every Mind Matters [mental health action plan](#).

Diabetes UK also has resources to help with low mood, anxiety and/or depression, which are geared towards people who have diabetes. Living with diabetes can have a negative impact on our emotional well-being and

quality of life, partly as it can be difficult to switch off from it, and its requirements can be very demanding. If we do 'switch off' from it, it has a habit of making itself difficult to ignore and making us feel rubbish.

Check out Diabetes UK's mental health resources:

Emotions

Depression

Starts  
**Monday**  
**10th**  
**May**

# EasyFundraising



Please support Sheffield Diabetes UK through #easyfundraising!

We're all keen to get back to shopping in shops, but if (whenever) you next shop online, PLEASE will you support our group through EasyFundraising?

You can raise FREE donations when you shop online from over 5,000 retailers; they pay a small premium to EasyFundraising for the pleasure of our custom, and that is passed to the charity you choose (hopefully Sheffield Diabetes UK)! The donations aren't large, but the more of us who do this, the more the group will benefit.

It only takes 2 minutes to sign up!

Any funds we raise go towards running the group; eg paying for the hire of Houlden Hall, occasional raffle prizes, cost of postage and printing, room hire & lunch for large events, occasional donations for non-NHS funded items for people in need, and towards funding research into diabetes.

Every one of us has benefitted from Diabetes Research!

Once you've raised your first £5, EasyFundraising will match it! Please sign up!

## Telephone Appointments How was it for you?



To get 5 free entries to the online draw PLEASE RETURN THE SURVEY asap

### Our survey of people's experiences of remote diabetes consultations

We've heard from NHS doctors that they're finding that younger adults and teenagers are engaging more with their NHS team through telephone and online appointments which is really fabulous! For many of us, not spending time travelling and waiting has been an unexpected bonus! Have the remote consultations been useful to you? What were they like?

Sheffield NHS does want feedback from people living with diabetes about how the remote reviews are going and Diabetes UK and our local group have been supporting an anonymous survey about our experiences of remote consultations.

The survey is still available, both online and by email. However, the online version has meant that we can only receive short answers, although we invite people to send longer answers in emails to [DiabetesUK.Sheffield@gmail.com](mailto:DiabetesUK.Sheffield@gmail.com) if you want or need to say more.

We can also send you the questions in an email; this is absolutely fine!

Find the survey [here](#).

## DIABETES AND ME.

### North of England family competition.

#### What do you need to do?

Be creative. Create a masterpiece showing us what diabetes means to you and your family.

Think outside the box, create a story, draw a picture, you could even write a song, poem or rap!

#### Who can take part?

Children under 18 years old living with diabetes and their siblings.

This competition will be judged in four categories:

- Children living with diabetes aged 0-5 years
- Children living with diabetes aged 6-12 years
- Children living with diabetes aged 13+ years
- Siblings aged 18 and under

#### Prizes

Our partner, Next, have kindly donated 4 family hampers for each of the prize categories.

We will also be celebrating all entries on our social media platforms.

#### How to submit?

Submit your entry to [n.west@diabetes.org.uk](mailto:n.west@diabetes.org.uk) by the 31<sup>st</sup> May 2021.

The winner will be announced Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> June on our website and Facebook page.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact [n.west@diabetes.org.uk](mailto:n.west@diabetes.org.uk)

**DIABETES UK**  
KNOW DIABETES. FIGHT DIABETES.



# Safe Fasting during Ramadan and managing your diabetes

## DO

- ✓ See your doctor or healthcare team for diabetes advice before fasting.
- ✓ Drink lots of water in the non-fasting hours.
- ✓ Get time outdoors to increase vitamin D levels.
- ✓ Both at Suhoor and Iftar, eat food such as a handful of basmati rice, daal or 1-2 small wholemeal chapattis to give you slow-release energy. Include some lean protein and lots of vegetables. A small handful of nuts won't affect your blood sugar.
- ✓ If you have a blood glucose meter check your sugar levels 3-4 times through the day, whether your diabetes is treated with tablets or injections.

- ✓ **Break your fast if you feel 'hypo' and your blood sugar level is less than 4.0 mmol/L - this is always important and especially if you get a low blood sugar in the early stages of your fast.**

**'Having a hypo' when your blood glucose levels are too low, and you've become hypoglycaemic - common symptoms include: dizziness, hunger, sweating, tiredness, anxiety, disorientation, blurred vision (more info here).**

## DON'T

- ✗ Fast if you are pregnant without seeking medical advice.
- ✗ Fast if you are on dialysis.
- ✗ Fast if your diabetes is not being managed well at this time (which means HbA1c is higher than 64 mmol/mol).
- ✗ Exercise too energetically during the fasting hours.
- ✗ Eat large amounts of sugar snacks, such as samosas, dates, milkshakes and oily rice. Only eat a few dates to break your fast.



If you need advice from a health professional, contact your GP. If you are a patient at Sheffield Diabetes Centre call 0114 271 4445. Contact the Diabetes UK Helpline on 0345 123 2399.

## Some tips to ensure your Eid-al-Fitr is healthy!

Many of us will be celebrating Eid al-Fitr this month; Eid Mubarak all! This guidance on celebrating healthily can be used by anyone celebrating when there's sweet things on offer!

Many thanks to Diabetes nsw & act (more info here) – and for your great recipes.

### Portion control

Before serving, decide what and how much you'll eat. This will help avoid overeating. Avoid piling food on your plate as you may feel pressured to eat it. Politely refuse second helpings.

### Let vegetables come first

Yes, even at Eid! Have half your plate filled by lovely healthy vegetables!

### Beat the sweet tooth

You might like to have 3 dried dates with walnuts, or 2 dried figs before you start, and then avoid other sweets, or have ones with low sugar alternatives (see below).

### Mindfulness

It can be easy to go overboard with delicious treats (more info here). Eating slowly, focusing on the feel, taste & sensation of chewing each mouthful will help you enjoy the day.

### Homemade sweets

Try making your own sweets so they're healthy and tasty. Use an artificial sweetener or Stevia (more info here) instead of sugar, honey or syrup.

### Leave the table once you're done

Once you have enjoyed your share of delights leave the table to avoid more sweets. Enjoying sweets in moderation is key.

### Blood glucose monitoring

Check your blood glucose levels more often. (watch video here) Changes in routine & eating habits and changes to your medication after Ramadan can have surprising effects. If you have high blood sugar levels (>15mmol/L) you may be at risk of severe dehydration; you may feel drowsy, confused and need urgent medical attention. Talk to your diabetes nurse (or 111) if your blood sugars stay high.

### More info on high blood sugars

- Type 1 (and occasionally Type 2) (more info here)
- for people with Type 2 diabetes (more info here)

### Walk round the block

Even a short walk can lift your mood and help in managing your appetite and blood sugar. (more info here)

### Drinking water

Drinking water is vital to prevent dehydration after fasting. Your kidneys use water to flush sugar out of your body. Try to drink a cup of water every hour.

Thanks to Dyala Al Jabi, Dietitian

## COVID-19 Vaccination



The vaccine is proven to be safe and effective. Having the vaccine does not invalidate your fast - it is supported by Islamic scholars and the British Islamic Medical

Association. If you receive an invitation for vaccination please do not delay due to Ramadan. Find out more [here](#).

## Manage your Glaucoma during Ramadan

If you've been prescribed eye drops for your glaucoma, it is essential you continue to use them to prevent damage to your sight.

The charity Glaucoma UK can help you manage your glaucoma while fasting the Ramadan. Find out more [here](#).



## Spot the differences

Find the 6 differences between the two pictures of Hunters Bar (you can zoom in a bit 😊)



Photo: Benjamin Elliott

5 min puzzle