



**TURNING
POINT**
inspired by possibility



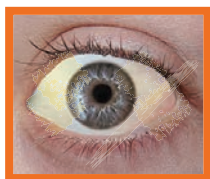
Physical health



Booklet 4

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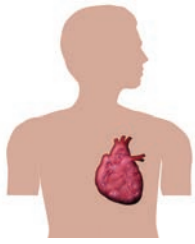
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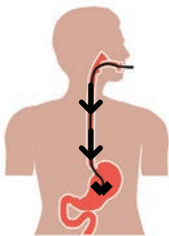
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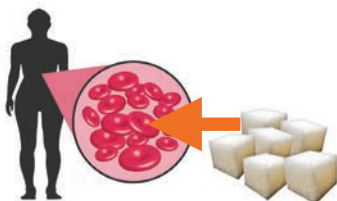
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Physical health



It is really important you look after all the different parts of your body.

Eyes



It is really important to get your eyes tested every 2 years.



Lots of people in the UK are not getting their eyes tested.



This can lead to problems with your sight now and in the future.



People with a learning disability are more likely to have sight problems.

They are also less likely to get proper care and support.



Sometimes, people with a learning disability are not able to tell anyone that they have a sight problem.

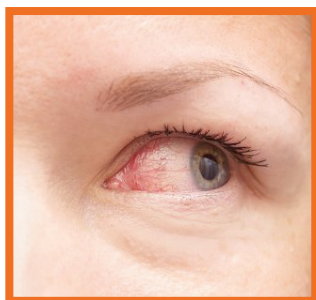
You might have a problem with your eyes if you have things like:



- red or sore eyes



- the whites of your eyes turn yellow



- sticky eyes or lumps in your eye



- your eyes are flickering

Keeping your mouth and teeth healthy



Having a healthy mouth is a really important part of looking after yourself.



This includes your teeth, gums, tongue, cheek and the roof of your mouth.



People with a learning disability have more problems with their teeth and mouth.



Lots of people with a learning disability find it hard to get a dentist.

Our top tips for a healthy mouth



Try to use an electronic toothbrush.



Use a pea sized amount of toothpaste.



Brush twice a day for at least 2 minutes.



Brush **all** of your teeth. Brush the front and back and tops and gums.



Spit out the toothpaste but do not rinse.



Clean false teeth with a brush and rinse afterwards.



Go for regular check ups at your dentist.



Look out for things like:

- pain or aching in your tooth
- bad breath or sore gums
- teeth that are bleeding or loose
- trouble swallowing and eating



Healthy ears



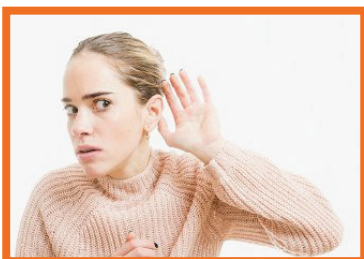
It is normal for you to lose some hearing as you get older.



4 out of 10 people with a learning disability have problems with their ears.

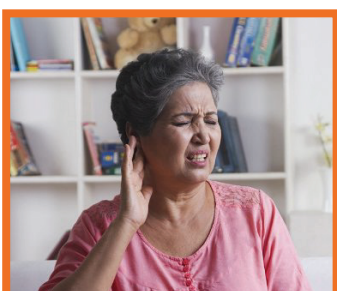


People with a learning disability often cannot say if they have a hearing problem.



Signs you have problems with your hearing include:

- not being able to hear properly
- having pain in your ears





- lots of wax in your ears



- liquid coming out of your ears

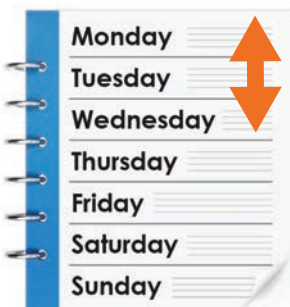


Ear infections

Infected ears can be really painful.



The pain can be a sharp shooting pain or a buzzing. It might come and go.



Infected ears often get better on their own within a few days.



Signs you have an ear infection could be:

- earache, red or painful ears
- feeling dizzy or unsteady on your feet



- liquid coming out of your ear



You should contact your doctor if:

- your earache lasts for more than 3 days

or



- you have a high temperature

Losing your hearing



You may not notice if you are losing your hearing at first. It can happen slowly over time.

You might start to notice things like:



- you need to turn the TV up



- you are struggling to hear what people are saying



- you might not hear your doorbell

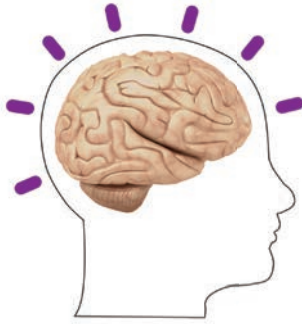


- you can't hear people around you



If you think you are losing your hearing, you should see your doctor straightaway.

Epilepsy



Epilepsy is an illness that affects your brain. It can cause people to have **seizures**.



A **seizure** is when there is a burst of electricity in the brain. This stops the brain from working properly.



A seizure can cause the person to fall to the floor and jerk and shake their body.



This normally passes in a few seconds or minutes.



When the person comes round they can feel confused and sleepy.

Seizures		5
1		4
2		3
3		2
4		1

There are lots of different types of seizures. Some are more dangerous than others.

Some types of seizures are:

Simple partial seizures or absence seizures

These types of seizures can be quite mild.



Sometimes it can be hard to tell if a person is having 1 of these seizures.



They may stay awake but seem a bit confused or scared.



Other signs can be:

- tingling in the arms
- stiffness
- weird smells and tastes



Sometimes a simple seizure can be a sign a bigger seizure is about to happen.



Complex partial seizure

A person who is having a complex seizure will completely lose sense of where they are.



They are not able to talk and may move about a lot.

Tonic-clonic seizure

This is when a person falls to the floor and goes stiff.

They might move their body about a lot and wet themselves.



After the seizure has finished, the person will probably feel tired and confused.



This normally stops after a few minutes.



People who have lots of seizures can be given medication.



But you must call an ambulance if a seizure lasts more than 5 minutes.





People with a learning disability are more likely to have epilepsy.



It is often difficult to tell if a person with a learning disability has epilepsy and what treatment they need.



Seizures can just come out of nowhere, but there are also things that can start them off. For example:

- not getting enough sleep

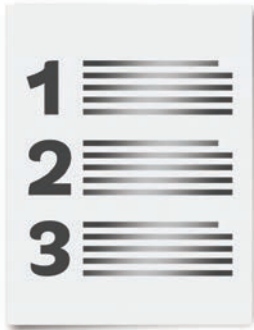
- lots of stress in your life

- flashing lights

- drugs and alcohol



It is really important to write down:



- how many seizures you have
- and**
- if you felt that something started it off



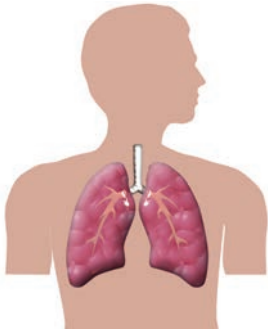
This way you can get the best treatment for you.



Epilepsy treatments include:

- medicines
- eating a special diet
- sometimes surgery





Chest infections

A **chest infection** is an infection in your lungs.



Chest infections happen a lot in the winter. You can get a chest infection after a bad cold or flu.

If you have a chest infection, you might have:



- a deep chesty cough. You might have thick green or yellow liquid that comes into your mouth when you cough



- a wheezy and sore chest. You might feel out of breath



- a high temperature more than 38°C degrees on a thermometer



- aches and pains in your body, arms and legs



Sometimes a chest infection happens because of a virus. This means that antibiotics won't work.



Your doctor will listen to your chest and give you antibiotics if you need them.



If you have a cough for more than 3 weeks, you should contact your doctor.

Pneumonia



Pneumonia can happen when a chest infection gets really bad.

We say this as **new mow nee a**.

Pneumonia can happen if your lungs fill with germs.



It can be very dangerous. You might need to go to hospital.



Lots of people with a learning disability die from pneumonia.



They have more chance of having problems with swallowing or finding it hard to eat or drink.

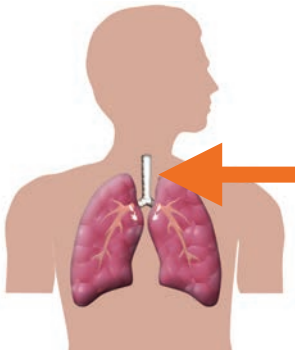


This means that they breathe things like food or spit into their lungs instead of swallowing them.



If this happens, it can cause an infection, or pneumonia.

Asthma



Asthma is an illness that affects the tubes that go from your mouth to your lungs. These tubes are called your **airways**.



If you have asthma, your tubes can swell up. This can make it hard for you to breathe.



Signs you have asthma include:

- coughing a lot, especially at night
- having a tight chest, losing your breath or finding it hard to breathe





- feeling really tired and weak when you do exercises



Things that make asthma worse are :

- breathing in fumes from cigarettes, chemicals or mould



- being **allergic** to things like bedding, animals, insects or food.

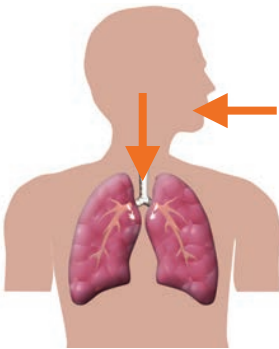


Being **allergic** means something affects you if you are near to it. You might get a rash or find it hard to breathe.

How to treat asthma



Most people with asthma use an inhaler to help them treat their asthma.



You use this to breathe medication straight into your airways.

There are two types of inhaler:

Brown inhalers



These are called **preventers** and should be taken every day. They have steroids in them that keep your airways wide.

This stops you from having problems breathing.



Blue inhalers

These are called **relievers**. They help widen your airways to help you breathe easier.

You take this inhaler when you are finding it hard to breathe.



There are lots of other things you can get to help with your asthma.



Your doctor will tell you which inhaler is right for you.



You should also get an asthma plan and check up every year.



Signs of an asthma attack

An asthma attack is when someone feels they cannot breathe properly.



It can happen suddenly or over a few hours.



You cannot catch your breath to talk, sleep or eat.



Your breathing gets faster and faster. You may be wheezy and have a tight chest.



You may have a cough.

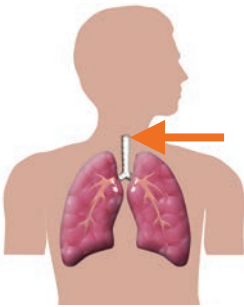


If your asthma attack keeps getting worse, or your lips turn blue, call 999 straightaway.

Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease



This is called **COPD** for short.



COPD is an illness caused by your airways being swollen and damaged.



This makes it difficult to breathe.



It can make you feel really tired and poorly.



COPD can stop people getting out and about and doing everyday things.

This can leave people feeling sad and lonely.



COPD can be caused by smoking. It usually affects older people.



If you have COPD you may:

- cough a lot and have lots of chest infections



- feel tired and weak a lot



- lose weight and have swollen ankles



- cough up blood or lots of thick yellow or green liquid

How to treat COPD



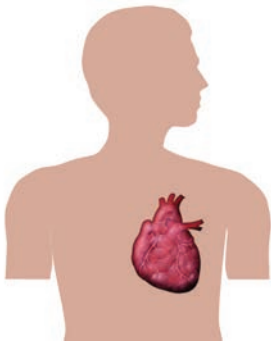
Inhalers are given to people with COPD as well as other medicines.



If you have COPD, you will see a special nurse every year for check up.



The nurse will help you get the right treatment. They will talk to you about things you can do to keep yourself healthy.



Heart disease

Heart disease is a name for lots of different problems people can have with their heart.



Heart problems kill more people with a learning disability than any other health problem.

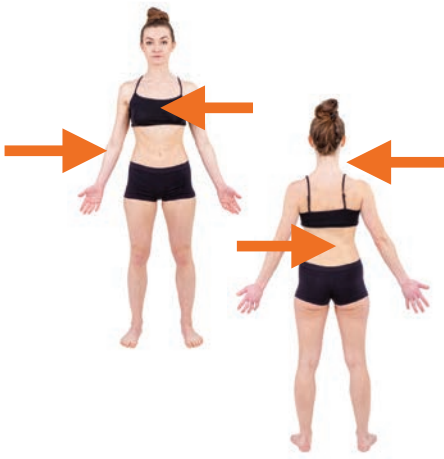


Heart attack

A **heart attack** is when the supply of blood to the heart is blocked.



If this happens, your body cannot pump blood round. This is very dangerous.



You might feel pain in your chest, back, neck and arms.



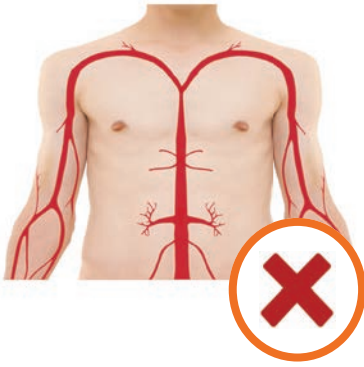
You might feel ill or be sick, and have heartburn or stomach problems.



A heart attack is an emergency. It can kill you very quickly.

It is really important to call 999 straightaway.

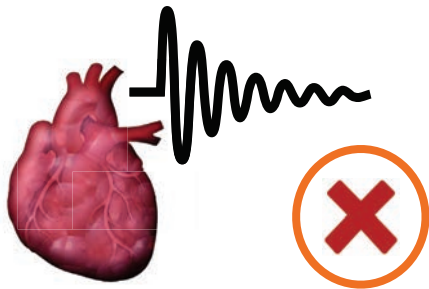
Heart failure



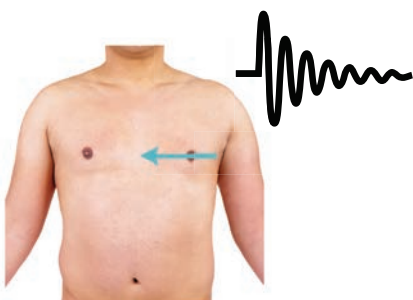
This is when your heart cannot pump enough blood around your body to keep it working properly.



It can make you feel dizzy, out of breath and not able to do everyday things.



There are other types of heart disease. Things like when your heart does not beat properly or cannot pump enough blood.



Treatment for heart disease can include:

- devices put in your body to measure how your heart is beating



- medication

or



- surgery



The most important thing is to live a healthy life.

You could eat healthy food and exercise.



Smoking and drinking alcohol are not healthy things to do.



Dysphagia

We say this as **dis fay jee uh**.



Dysphagia is when you have problems with swallowing, eating and drinking.



Lots of people with a learning disability have problems with swallowing. But it is often difficult to tell.



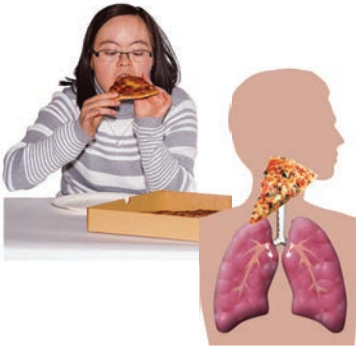
They can also choke easily.

Sometimes people can choke without making any sound. This can be really dangerous.



Signs of dysphagia include:

- coughing or pain when eating



- feeling like food is stuck and won't go down properly



- chest infections or wheezing



- losing weight and not wanting to eat or drink



- feeling sad or showing any changes in the way you behave



- not able to cope with lumps in food, choking on food and being sick



You might also find it really hard to take any medication you might need.



If you have problems swallowing, you will see a nurse.



You may have to have a special diet.

Your food might have to be mashed or made easier to eat.

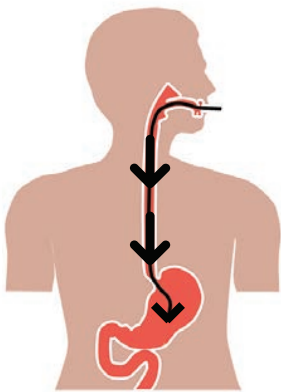


Sometimes, people are not able to eat properly. They get food and drink through the tube instead.

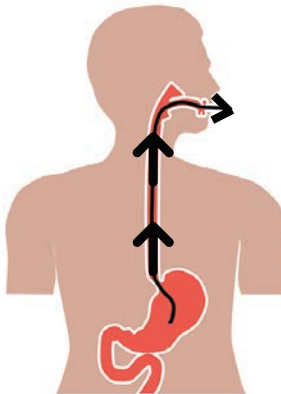


Gastro-Oesophageal Reflux Disease

This is called **GORD** for short.



GORD is a problem with the tube that takes your food down to your stomach.



If you have GORD, your tube is weak and doesn't work properly.

This means that acid from your stomach can come back up again.



This causes a burning feeling in your chest and problems with your stomach.



Nearly half of all people with a learning disability have this problem.



Signs of GORD include:

- feeling sick and having problems swallowing



- having a horrible taste in your mouth. This is from the stomach acid coming back up



- burping and feeling uncomfortable



- chest pain and a cough that won't go away



To treat GORD, you can take medicines that slow down how much acid you make in your stomach.



You might have to have tests at the hospital.



Some people need to have surgery.

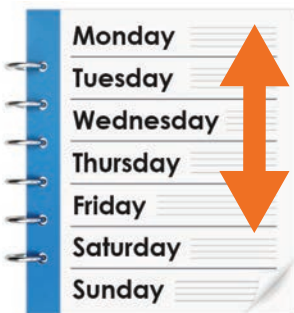
Urinary Tract Infection



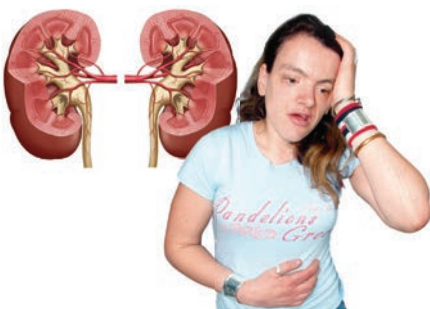
This is called a **UTI** for short. We say it as **yoo tee eye**.



A UTI is a problem with your bladder. It can cause pain when you go for a wee.



These infections can happen to anyone, but they are more likely to happen to older people. They usually pass in a few days.



More serious infections can cause infections in your kidneys.



In older people, UTIs can make them confused. It might look like they have **dementia**.

Dementia is when the cells in your brain become damaged or die.



Signs you may have a UTI are:

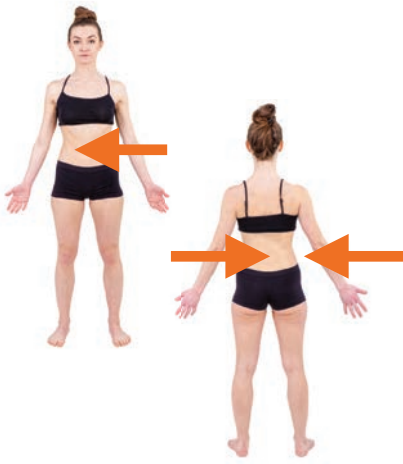
- pain and a burning feeling when you go for a wee



- wanting to go for wee more often. And feeling like you still need a wee even after you have been



- your wee looks darker, cloudy or has blood in it. Your wee should be very pale or nearly clear



- pain in your stomach, side or back. The pain is worse when you go for a wee



- you have a high or low temperature



- you feel sick or are sick or you have the runs



UTIs can also make you feel shivery, confused or cause you to wet yourself.

Things you can do to stop yourself from getting a UTI



Try to have a full wee and empty your bladder when you go to the toilet.
Don't hold on to it.



Always go for a wee straight after you have had sex.



Drink lots of water. You should drink at least 6 to 8 large glasses of water a day.



Keep yourself clean. You should wash yourself properly every day and only use soap with no perfume in.



When wiping yourself after you have been to the loo, always wipe from front to back. This is to stop any infections.



Wear cotton knickers and don't wear tight trousers.



If you notice a change in someone's behaviour, it is really important to rule out a UTI.



If a person gets a lot of UTIs, it should be written in their care plan.

The plan should also say what treatment and support they need.

Trouble going for a poo



We are all different when it comes to going for a poo.

Some people go more than once a day. Other people only go a few times a week.



It is really important that you know what is normal for you. This means you can notice quickly if there are any changes.



Constipation

Constipation is when you find it really hard to do a poo.



This affects nearly half of all people with a learning disability.



Constipation must be treated quickly.



If it is left, poo can build up in your body. This can be very dangerous. You could get really ill or die.



Signs you may have constipation

Not having a poo at least 3 times in the last week.



Your poo is dry, hard or lumpy.



Having a poo causes lots of pain. You have to push really hard to get it out.



Your stomach feels swollen and full and you feel sick.



Things that can cause constipation are:

- health problems and illness



- holding your poo in for too long. This damages the muscle that helps you push your poo out



- not eating enough fruit or vegetables or fibre like cereals and beans



- not drinking enough water or other liquids



- not moving around enough



- taking some medications



To stop constipation, you need to make sure you have lots of fibre in your diet.

This means foods like: fruit, vegetables, whole bread, oats, nuts and seeds.



You must drink 6 to 8 large glasses of water a day.



Don't drink lots of tea, coffee or alcohol.



Get plenty of exercise. This helps you to go for a poo more often.

Diarrhoea



We say diarrhoea like this:
dye ho reea.

Some people call it **having the runs.**

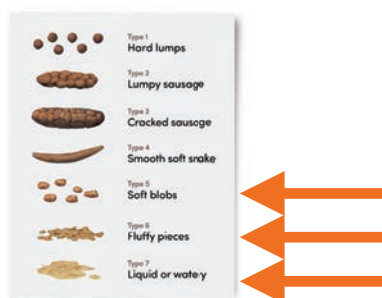


Having diarrhoea means that you:

- poo a lot more than is normal for you

or

- have more runny or soft poo than is normal for you





Diarrhoea can happen to anyone at anytime. It is usually nothing to worry about.



Most of the time, diarrhoea goes away on its own. If it doesn't, you might have to see a doctor.



You can get diarrhoea from:

- an infection in your bowels. This could be from a virus or eating food that wasn't safe to eat



- drinking too much coffee or alcohol



- taking some medications

To stay safe from diarrhoea and not spread it to other people, you should:



- wash your hands for more than 20 seconds with soap and hot water.

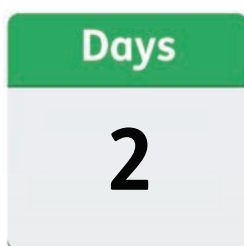
Do this every time you have been to the toilet or before you go near food



- always clean the toilet, the handle and seat after you have had diarrhoea



- not share things like towels or knives and forks with other people



- stay at home for at least 2 days after you last had diarrhoea



Looking after your feet



People with a learning disability are more likely to have problems with their feet.



They also don't get access to **podiatry** services. **Podiatry** services have staff who are experts in feet.



You need to make sure you look after your feet and check them often.



You can get lots of problems with your feet. Things like:

- mould on your toenails

or

- **bunions.** These are growths on your feet





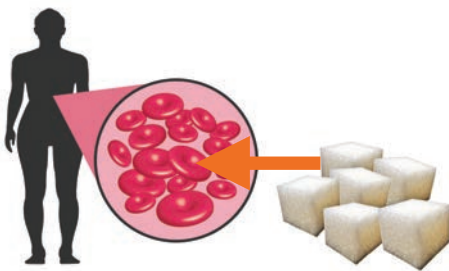
It is really important not to let your toenails grow too long. You should cut them often.



Make sure you wash your feet often and dry them properly, especially between your toes.



If someone is in a wheelchair, their feet still need to be checked often.



Problems with feet can also be caused by **diabetes**.

Diabetes is an illness where your body cannot control the right amount of sugar in your blood.



Anyone with diabetes should have regular check ups on their feet.

Other foot problems include:

Athletes foot

This is when your skin goes dry, flaky, red and sore in between your toes. It can be treated with cream and spray



Ingrown toenail

This is when your toenail starts to grow into your skin.



An ingrown toenail can be caused by:

- cutting your nails too short
- wearing shoes that are too tight

or

- hurting your toe



Verrucas

Verrucas are warts that grow on the bottom of your foot.

They look like small rough lumps that can be really painful.

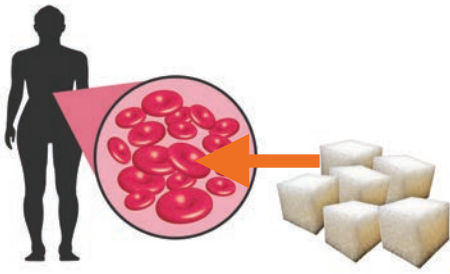


Other people can catch them from you easily.

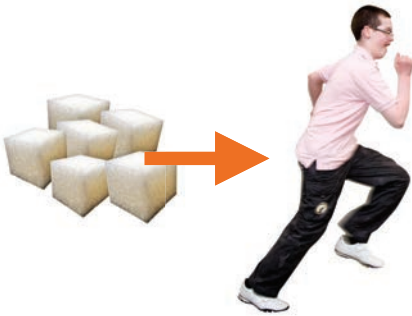


You will need special cream to put on your verrucas. They can take a long time to go away.

Diabetes



Diabetes is an illness where your body cannot control the right amount of **sugar** in your blood.

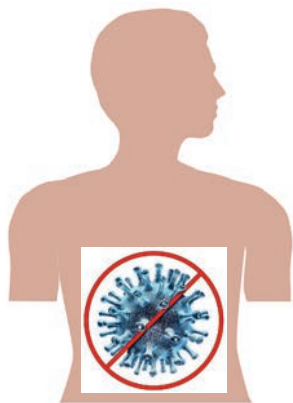


This happens when your body does not make enough **insulin**.

Insulin is a hormone our bodies need to turn sugar into energy.



People with a learning disability are much more likely to get diabetes than everyone else.



There are **two types** of diabetes:

Type 1 diabetes

This is when the body's immune system kills off cells you need to make insulin.



People can have this type of diabetes from a young age. It is **not** caused by living an unhealthy lifestyle.

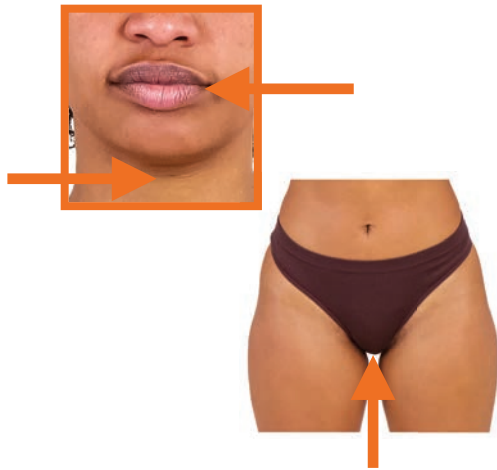


Signs of type 1 diabetes include:

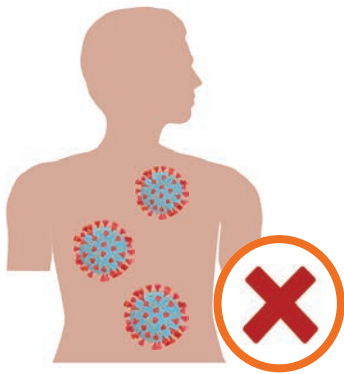
- feeling really thirsty and going for a wee more often



- losing weight or feeling unwell



- **thrush.** This is an infection that can grow in your mouth, throat, vagina and other parts of your body. It can make you sore and itchy



Type 2 diabetes

This is when your body does not have enough insulin to work properly.



Most people who have diabetes in the UK have type 2 diabetes.



This type of diabetes is caused by having an unhealthy diet or lifestyle.



Signs of type 2 diabetes include:

- feeling really thirsty and going for a wee more often



- having blurry sight or problems with your eyes



- having sores on the bottom of your feet



- weird feelings in your toes or legs

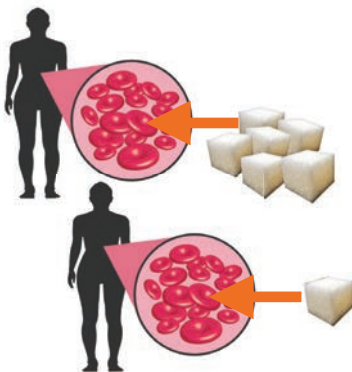


To treat diabetes, you need to measure the amount of sugar in your blood. Then you need to take the right amount of insulin.

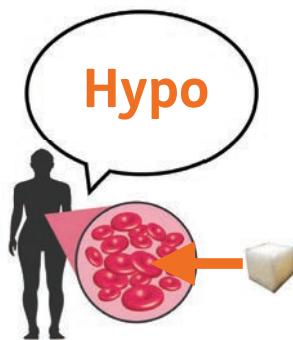


For type 2 diabetes it is really important to have a healthy diet and get lots of exercise.

Making sure you have the right amount of sugar in your blood



People with diabetes can sometimes have too little or too much sugar in their blood.



Low blood sugar

This is sometimes called a **hypo**. It happens when the amount of sugar in your blood falls too low.

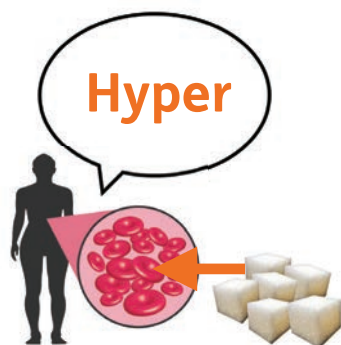


This can make you dizzy, fall over and see flashing lights.





People who have hypos should carry a sugary snack with them in case they need it.



High blood sugar

This is sometimes called a **hyper**. This is when the sugar levels in your blood are too high.



This might happen if a person with diabetes has:

- eaten too much

or



- is not taking their medication properly



Anyone who has diabetes should have a check up at their doctors every year.



They will have tests to check they are managing their diabetes.

Pressure sores and ulcers



It is really important to keep your skin healthy.



Pressure sores and ulcers are sores on your skin.



They are caused by too much pressure being on your skin for a long time.



This means blood cannot get to your skin properly.



Pressure sores and ulcers could happen if you:

- have to stay in bed a lot



- sit in a wheelchair most of the time



- have a problem with your skin



These sores usually happen over time.



If you can't get out of bed, you should have your skin checked often. This is to make sure it is ok.

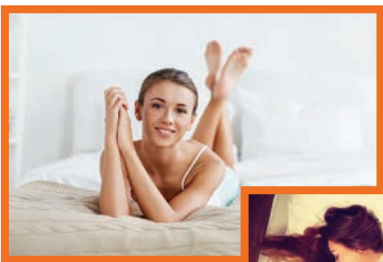


You are most likely to get sores on your back, shoulders, bum, heels and head.



Pressure sores are given a number from 1 to 4. This shows what stage they are at and how bad they are.

Level 4 is the worst type of sore.



Things you can do to stop getting pressure sores include:

- don't stay in the same position for too long
- change the way you are sat or lying down often



- have a healthy diet. Make sure you eat lots of fruit and vegetables and protein like chicken



- stop smoking. Smoking stops your blood from pumping around your body properly



- have the right type of bed or seat. You can get special beds and chairs that protect your skin better



- use medicines and creams that are made to help pressure sores. Your nurse can get these for you

Coronavirus or COVID-19



COVID-19 is a virus that can spread from person to person.

When you cough or sneeze, drops of liquid come from your nose or mouth.

COVID-19 is passed on through these drops of liquid.



You can also pick up COVID-19 from touching surfaces like door handles, light switches or toilets.

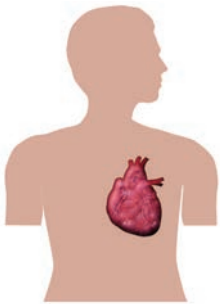


Most people who catch COVID-19 only have mild symptoms and will get better on their own.

Some people are more at risk of getting really ill with COVID-19. This includes:



- older people



- people with heart and chest problems



- people who have a long term health condition



- people from a Black, Asian or minority ethnic group



- people with a learning disability



Symptoms of COVID-19 include:

- a high temperature



- a cough that is new or won't go away



- losing your smell and taste or things smelling and tasting different



If you become ill with COVID-19 it is important that you stay at home.



You should not see any other people until your test comes back clear.



You should make sure anyone you have been near or live with knows you have COVID-19.



In the UK you can get an injection to protect you from COVID-19. The injection is called a vaccine.