

Explosion in Type 2 Diabetes - a Victoria Road patient's story

July 24th 2013 I was told I had a HbA1c reading of 6.5, which was no great surprise as I was overweight, smoked and loved eating stodgy food! A month later it was 6.6. I was angry at first that I could no longer eat what I wanted and when. I went home researched on the internet to find what is classed as a healthy diet for diabetics, emptied my cupboards and freezer of the convenience food and wrote a list of what I could have and went to Tesco. Just to let you know I hate cooking, food shopping and am renowned for being a total disaster in the kitchen! I spent an hour and a half looking at food labels. A diabetic needs 45-60g of carbs each meal, no more than 20g carbs per snack and 10g of sugar per serving with 4-30g fibre per day. I also made a note of RDA on all nutrients. I have now lost 34lbs. I eat more and make sure I eat breakfast, lunch and tea with snacks in between. I've even baked (diabetic friendly cheese scones) for the first time in 20 years. My significant other, Paul, also joined me on this life changing adventure and has lost 22lbs and dropped his HbA1c reading by 0.2 in a month as he was borderline diabetic. Diabetes no matter how well controlled over a long period of time will cause health complications. We want to retire in good health after working all our lives, so we have taken on board that I am diabetic and that we will control it and not have it control us. Very soon I will have my 3 month blood check to see what affect my diet has had and you never know I may have reversed it'.

Sharon Miller



Sharon and Paul



Dr Rachel Butler
Victoria Road Surgery GP
is concerned at the rise of Type 2
Diabetes amongst our patients

If you would like to follow in Sharon's footsteps, we are here to help - our nurses can offer advice and diet sheets to get you started. Just ask.

The prevalence of type 2 diabetes is increasing at an alarming rate in the UK and we are seeing this in our practice. In 2011 we had 441 patients with the condition and today the figure is 555, an increase of 25% in just 2 years.

But there are also over three quarters of a million people with undiagnosed diabetes. We know that the complications of diabetes usually start to develop before the symptoms - tiredness, passing urine frequently and thirst - show themselves. It is really important that we try to diagnose diabetes as early as possible, and this means testing for it before symptoms start, particularly in people who are at higher risk.

People at higher risk are those who are overweight or obese, people with a family history of type 2 diabetes and women who developed diabetes during pregnancy. If you fall into any of these



categories and would like to be tested please ask us to do a blood test. In the past we relied on fasting blood sugar testing and glucose tolerance testing, but we now know that these tests do not pick up all diabetes in the early stages. A better test may be HbA1c which measures how much sugar has become attached to your blood cells and is a better reflection of longer term raised sugar levels. Diabetes is diagnosed when the level is 6.5% or more. Levels between 6.0% and 6.4% indicate pre-diabetes - this

means the person is at higher risk of diabetes in future but does not yet have the condition. Losing weight is a key part of treatment in those people who are overweight at diagnosis. It will help to increase the body's sensitivity to insulin and to regulate blood sugar levels better. For some it may even reverse the process of diabetes.

Sharon and Paul's determination to improve their health and fight diabetes head on by losing weight and eating better is an example to us all. Well done to them both!

It's not too
late to book
a FLU jab!

To
listen
and
offer
support



Sue Caslake, from our local Advocacy Service

TAKING ACTION is a brand new **ADVOCACY SERVICE** being developed by the West Sussex charity Independent Living Association (ILA) in partnership with Victoria Road and St Lawrence Surgery in Worthing.

Advocacy (*ad-vo-ca-cy*) *noun*
definition: Providing active support, esp of a cause

The service is here to help patients at the surgery whose needs go beyond those that a GP can provide, typically social or wellbeing issues rather than medical, for example: you may be feeling isolated and would like support to find out what options/activities are available to you. As the name suggests, the service is there to support patients to take action and speak up in situations where they lack confidence or aren't being taken seriously. Advocates can help people to explore and resolve issues which may be having a bad impact on their health. By supporting and empowering individuals to resolve issues the aim is for those people to find it easier to manage similar situations in the future without the need for support. **Taking Action** is accessed at the surgery with follow-up support through a team of volunteer advocates. GPs and surgery staff are able to refer patients to the service in the knowledge that they will receive the support they need. The project is funded by the Department of Health, and if successful, the idea could be extended to other surgeries locally and eventually nationally. As well as benefiting patients, it has the potential to save costs for the NHS and reduce pressure on social, primary and secondary care services.



Jane de Jong Practice Manager

Here we are again; autumn and winter with Christmas in the middle to keep our spirits warm!

But, what a great summer we had? We were thoroughly spoilt this year, and when September turned and the weather changed I noticed the cold much more than I have in years gone by!

Hopefully you will now have had your flu jab, so you can wrap up warm, get plenty of exercise - perhaps by taking walks by our lovely coast, on the Downs or in the woods with wellies and scarfs and hats! I really like this time of year as there is quite a lot to look forward to with the exception of the dark mornings, they really do make me want to stay in bed!

This season, we here at the Practice really want to encourage people to use 'Self Help' for a lot of minor illnesses and for managing more serious conditions. We want you to be able to take control of your health with physical and mental health focus.

By becoming more health literate, we hope people will understand how to look after themselves and choose healthy options that will impact positively on physical health as well as mental wellbeing and self-esteem.

By looking after your health today, the NHS will be there for you tomorrow.

NHS resources are currently stretched and are being overused where it is not always necessary. With all of this in mind, we are providing self-help literature to help you make other decisions. We really hope you will take time to read some.

Alternatively go on-line to the Self Care Forum for information:

selfcareforum.org/fact-sheets there is some really helpful information available.

Our annual Patient Survey has been available for you to complete. As soon as we have the results we will of course publish them in the waiting room and on our web site and then review the feedback with our **Patient Participation Group** and **Patient Reference Group**. Feedback I have been receiving recently relates to the inability to get through to the Practice quickly in the mornings on the phone to

book an appointment. Please can I remind you that you can book appointments on-line, this would alleviate the problem for you if you do have access to the internet - and if you would like help doing this see the article below written by Cyril Selby, a member of our Patient Participation Group.

I also want you to make the most of your appointment with the GP and not leave the surgery realising there was something you wished you had said. So, follow the tips below for a successful consultation.

Unfortunately, the phones are very busy in the mornings and even if we increased our phone lines we still believe there would be a wait for some. Of course we are sorry as we understand this to be frustrating and inconvenient when you want to get on. If your appointment is not urgent and is routine, try and call at a less busy time of day (late morning, lunchtime etc), alternatively maybe our 'Self Help' leaflets may help and you might decide to follow the advice on these. Important to remember, is that we will help you whatever time of day you phone in.

Once again, lots of thanks for your on-going feedback, support and understanding that the NHS is not a limitless resource.

You CAN teach an old dog new tricks!



There is no telling what some people will get up to next.

Cyril Selby, one of our Patient Participation Group members, at the ripe old age of 87, has decided to start a new career.

The next time you pass through the Guildbourne Centre look into the shop where you will see several people operating computers. One of them will be Cyril who has become part of the team dedicated to teaching anyone how to use basic Microsoft Office, tablets (ipad, Android), Apple Mac and smart phones. The advantage of this training centre is that it is totally free as it is funded by the Lottery and various charities. All tuition is on a one-to-one basis.

The Centre is open 10am - 4pm, Monday to Friday and appointments are preferred, 'phone 01903 231356 for more details.

Why not pop in as Cyril would be delighted to show you that age has nothing to do with pressing buttons.

Everything you wanted to know about...

getting the most from your GP appointment

You may have had to wait to get to see the GP so it is worth following the tips included below to get the most out of your time with the doctor.

- Try to come on time. If you are late we may have to ask you to rebook your appointment. Our GPs are very busy and need to keep to their schedule.
- Each appointment is 10 minutes, double appointments are available if you feel you need longer.
- If you have more than one problem to discuss, tell your GP at the beginning of the consultation so they can be prioritised.
- If you are a new patient, bring your previous prescription - even the empty box will help!
- If you have a request for minor surgery or coil/implant fitting, inform the receptionist as these are only dealt with by specific GPs.
- Bring a sample with you if you have symptoms of a urine infection.

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