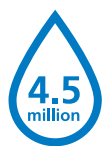




Why good diabetes management is important before your operation



There are an estimated **4.5 million people** (7% of the population) living with diabetes in the UK (Diabetes UK).



Around **700 people** every day receive a diagnosis of diabetes.



People with diabetes are **twice as likely to be admitted to hospital** compared to people without diabetes.



25% of patients with diabetes undergoing surgery are **undiagnosed** at the time of admission for their procedure.



The better your control of your diabetes the better your chances of an excellent surgical outcome.



You may need surgery for a complication of diabetes, or for some other problem that is unrelated to your diabetes.



In addition to the normal risks of surgery, **diabetics face additional risks** when having a surgical procedure.

What difference will managing my diabetes have before an operation?

There is good evidence that improving blood sugar and glycaemic (HbA1c) levels before your operation improves outcomes following surgery. In particular, improving your diabetes control before surgery will reduce the length of time you have to stay in hospital and:

- Reduce **heart complications** and the risk of stroke
- Reduce the risk of **hyperglycemia** (high blood sugar) or **hypoglycemia** (low blood sugar)
- Decrease the risk of poor or slow **wound healing, weak skin** and tissue at site of surgery
- Reduce the risk of **infection**, including infection of the wound, pneumonia, urinary tract infection or sepsis
- Reduce the risk of other serious complications including:
 - **Diabetic coma**
 - **Salt imbalance** (can cause significant problems with heart and body fluid levels)
- Reduce the risk of **worsening control of your diabetes** after surgery

When you have diabetes, managing your blood sugar is always important. But before you have surgery, it's vital. Improving blood sugar control before and after surgery improves healing and reduces complications. High blood sugar can increase your risk of infections and delay your recovery.

Karl Trimble, Consultant Orthopaedic Surgeon, Plymouth Hospitals NHS Trust



What you can do for a better surgical outcome

Blood sugar levels



Keep your **blood sugar within the parameters** your doctor recommends.

Eat well



Good nutrition, including high-quality protein, is essential.

Protein, such as oily fish, lean meat, tofu, grains and pulses is an important component in the healing process and can help contribute to faster wound healing, stronger tissue at the surgical site and an increased ability to withstand the rigours of surgery.

Move more



If you aren't already exercising but you are able, you may want to start walking more or an exercise program after checking with your doctor. **Making your body stronger is going to help you better tolerate your surgery and recovery.**

Stress less



Try not to get overly stressed about your surgery. It is important to keep stress to a minimum because both physical stress (the surgery) and emotional stress (worrying, anxiety) can work against you by elevating your blood sugar levels.

Drink less and be smoke free



If you drink or smoke, this is the time to stop. Eliminating alcohol will help you better control your blood sugar and quitting smoking will help you return to breathing without oxygen or a ventilator faster.

What FREE NHS help is available?

Your GP practice will be able to support you in a number of ways:

- They may have a **practice nurse** who specialises in supporting patients with diabetes who could discuss your options with you
- If there isn't a specialist nurse based at the practice they will have access to a **specialist diabetes team**
- If you have **high blood pressure** your GP practice will be able to support you to reduce this and improve any other health conditions you have which may increase the risks from surgery
- If you are **overweight, drink alcohol regularly or smoke**; then taking steps to reduce this will help reduce your risks
- If you are feeling **anxious**, they will be able to support you
- Contact your local **Healthy Lifestyle Service** for free group, or one-to-one help and advice from trained experts. Let them know that you are going to have an operation so they can give you priority

Devon Healthy Lifestyle Service

www.OneSmallStep.org.uk

0800 298 2654

Torbay Healthy Lifestyle Service

www.TorbayAndSouthDevon.nhs.uk/services/healthy-lifestyles/

0300 456 1006

One You Plymouth

www.OneYouPlymouth.co.uk

01752 437177

Cornwall Health Promotion Service

www.HealthPromCornwall.org