

Principles of drug therapy for type 2 diabetes

The Medical Officer at the PHC will decide on the drug therapy for the patient. Whether a person requires medicines and which medicine is best for the patient would depend on:

- The blood sugar reading.
- Whether the high blood sugar levels have already affected organs in the body such as heart, kidneys, eyes and blood vessels.
- Other medical conditions such as high blood pressure, heart disease, kidney disease, nerve and eye damage, and other risk factors like use of unhealthy dietary habits, lack of physical activity or low physical activity, tobacco, alcohol, overweight and high levels of harmful blood fats, etc.
- Other considerations such as age, sex (male/female) and body weight.

There are several classes of medicines that can be used for the management of hypertension, diabetes and common cancers. Every state has its Essential Drug List (EDL) for common diseases available. The essential drugs for Diabetes are expected to be available at the PHC, CHC and higher health facilities. This essential drug list is updated on a regular basis and varies state-wise.

Drugs for diabetes are available free of cost to those patients who use government health facilities. The drugs are prescribed by the medical officer and the patient should be given a month's supply of drugs. For diabetes, both oral drugs and Insulin injections can be provided based on the decision of the Medical Officer.

The patient should be able to collect refills every month from the nearest health facility. This could be a Sub-Centre (SC) or a Primary Health Centre (PHC).

The role of ASHA in management and control of high blood sugar levels (this also applies to those with high blood pressure).

ASHA should motivate those with high blood sugar levels to:

- Increase consumption of foods rich in fibre - variety of seasonal and fresh fruits, vegetables (including green leafy vegetables); whole grains and whole pulses and their products.
- Decrease consumption of refined cereals, foods rich in excess amount of fat/oil, foods rich in salt and sugar.
- Reduce the amount of salt : A maximum of 1 teaspoon (5 gms) of salt for the whole day should be consumed by those who have high blood pressure.
- Sugar should be avoided amongst those diagnosed with diabetes.