

Diabetes: improving control

This short decision aid is to help you decide what treatment to choose if you have type 2 diabetes that is not well controlled.

This document is a summary of the online patient decision aid which has much more information to help you. You can access it online at :<http://sdm.rightcare.nhs.uk/pda/diabetes-improving-control/>

The main treatment options for improving control in type 2 diabetes are:

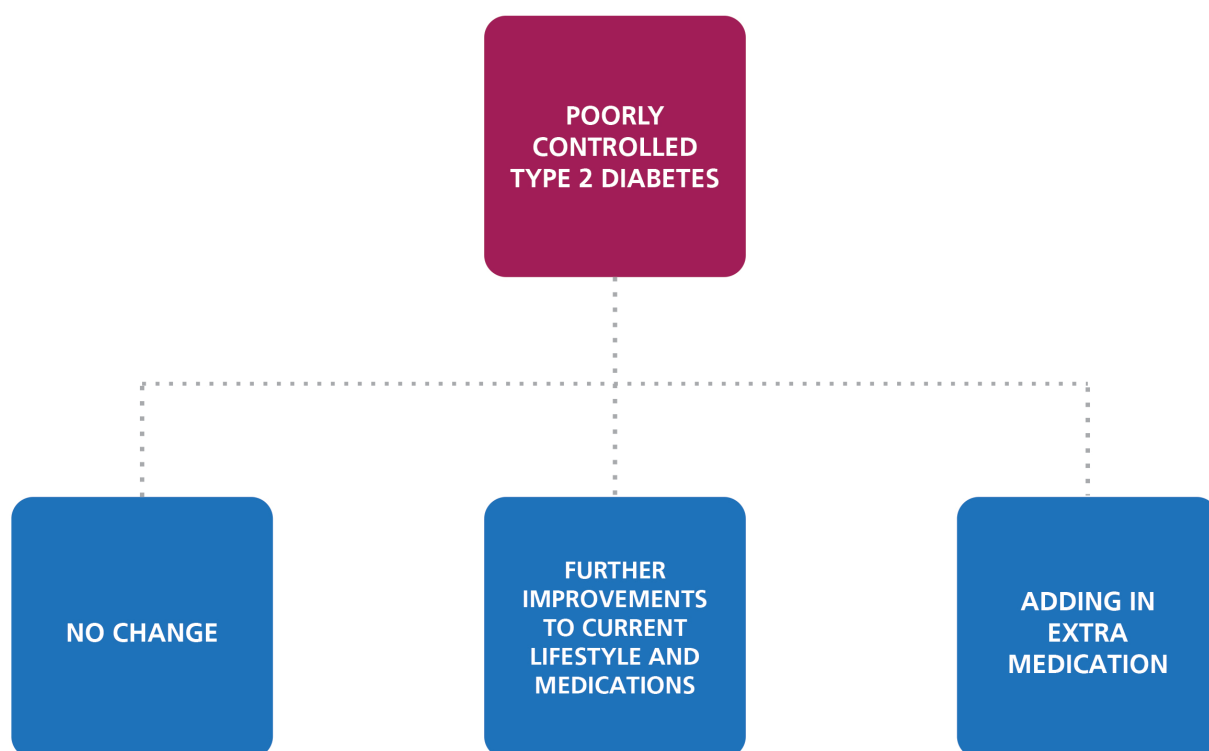
- No change - carrying on as normal. There may be good reasons why a change to try and improve a person's control isn't right at the moment.
- Making further improvements to current lifestyle and medication. This could mean: Making changes to what a person eats, drinks and exercise habits; Talking with a doctor or nurse about how to take current medications so they work better; There may be better timings, dosages or a different medication that would fit better into a person's life.
- Adding in extra medications. This means taking a different tablet or injection as well as those medications a person is on already. Note, if you are already taking two or more medications for your diabetes, see the decision aid on 'Diabetes: additional treatments to improve control'.

People don't have to choose just one of these options. A person could choose to make further improvements to current lifestyle and medication and take extra medications. These choices may depend on many things, including how much a person's symptoms are bothering them, how they feel about medications or injections and how worried they are about health problems in future.

The types of decisions people with poorly-controlled Type 2 diabetes are making include:

- My diabetes control is getting worse. What can I do to improve it?
- I feel alright at the moment. How do I know if I am likely to get other health problems in the future?
- I don't want to take more medications. What can I do instead?
- I have heart disease in my family. What's the best treatment or combination of treatments to avoid it?

The right choice for people with Type 2 diabetes may change over time. This decision aid aims to help them make the right choice for them now, but they may wish to change their mind as their diabetes or their life changes.



What are my options?

	No change	Further improvements to current lifestyle and medications	Adding in extra medication
What is the treatment?	Carrying on as usual. There may be good reasons why trying to improve control isn't right for someone at the moment.	This could mean: Making more changes to diet and lifestyle that may improve diabetes control; Taking more care to take current medication at the correct times and doses; Talking to the diabetes team about changing the dose or switching to another medication.	This means taking a different tablet, or injections, as well as what someone is already taking. People who are already taking two or more types of medication for their diabetes should see the decision aid on 'Diabetes: additional treatments to improve control'.

	No change	Further improvements to current lifestyle and medications	Adding in extra medication
What are the effects on symptoms?	People with symptoms of high blood sugars, such as feeling thirsty or tired or needing to urinate often, are unlikely to feel better with no change.	People with symptoms of high blood sugars, such as feeling thirsty or tired or needing to urinate often, may feel better if improvements to lifestyle and medications improve their diabetes control.	People with symptoms of high blood sugars, such as feeling thirsty or tired or needing to urinate often, may feel better if adding in extra medication improves their diabetes control.

	No change	Further improvements to current lifestyle and medications	Adding in extra medication
What are the effects on diabetes control?	Diabetes tends to get worse with time. It can't be cured but it can be controlled by keeping blood glucose down to safe levels. People with poor control who make no change may get worse faster.	Changes to lifestyle and medications can slow the progression of Type 2 diabetes if they keep blood glucose down to safe levels.	Adding in extra medication can slow the progression of Type 2 diabetes if it keeps blood glucose down to safe levels.

	No change	Further improvements to current lifestyle and medications	Adding in extra medication
What are the effects on your life?	Adding in a treatment means more visits to the diabetes team. People who drive buses, lorries or large vans and take insulin may face restrictions on their driving licences.	Improving lifestyle and taking medication as prescribed means being more motivated and organised. Changing dose or switching to another treatment may mean more visits to the diabetes team.	Adding in a treatment means more visits to the diabetes team. People who drive buses, lorries or large vans and take insulin may face restrictions on their driving licences.

	No change	Further improvements to current lifestyle and medications	Adding in extra medication
What are the effects on your quality of life?	No change doesn't affect quality of life in the short term. But long term health problems caused by poor control will affect quality of life.	Overweight people with Type 2 diabetes who lose weight may notice improvements in their quality of life. Switching from insulin to tablets might improve quality of life for some people. [1]	People whose diabetes control is improved with extra medication don't have a worse quality of life than poorly controlled people on less medication. [2]

	No change	Further improvements to current lifestyle and medications	Adding in extra medication
What are the potential side effects?	No change will not cause any side effects.	There are no side effects to having a healthy diet. Some medications can make blood sugars fall too low during or after physical activity. [3] No drugs are harmless and changing dose or switching to a new treatment might cause side effects.	No drugs are harmless and adding in a new treatment might cause side effects.

	No change	Further improvements to current lifestyle and medications	Adding in extra medication
What are the effects on potential complications?	People with poor diabetes control who make no change may have a higher chance of getting long term complications like damage to the eyes, kidneys and nerves, as well as heart disease and stroke. [4]	Improvements to lifestyle and medication can reduce people's chance of getting complications if they improve diabetes control. Every 10mmol/mol (1%) reduction in HbA1c cuts the chance of complications by 21%. [5]	Adding in extra medication can reduce people's chance of getting complications if it improves diabetes control. Every 10mmol/mol (1%) reduction in HbA1c cuts the chance of complications by 21%. [6]

	No change	Further improvements to current lifestyle and medications	Adding in extra medication
What are the effects on life expectancy?	People with Type 2 diabetes may live longer if they get their HbA1c levels down to around 58mmol/mol, or 7.5%. People with higher levels who make no change may reduce their life expectancy. [7]	People with Type 2 diabetes may live longer if they get their HbA1c levels down to around 58mmol/mol, or 7.5%. Improving lifestyle and medications may increase life expectancy if it improves control. [8]	People with Type 2 diabetes may live longer if they get their HbA1c levels down to around 58mmol/mol, or 7.5%. Adding in extra medication may increase life expectancy if it improves control. [9]

What are the pros and cons of each option?

People with type 2 diabetes have different experiences about the health problem and views on treatment. Choosing the treatment option that is best for the patient means considering how the consequences of each treatment option will affect their life.

Here are some questions people may want to consider about treatment for improving control in type 2 diabetes:

- Is avoiding complications of diabetes important to me?
- Am I willing to have a treatment that may make me put on weight?
- How do I feel about having injections?
- Am I willing to take lots of different medications?
- How do I feel about the potential side effects of some treatments?
- How important is it to me that I avoid hypoglycaemic episodes?
- How do I feel about the potential impact a treatment may have on my life?

How do I get support to help me make a decision that is right for me?

Go to <http://sdm.rightcare.nhs.uk/pda/diabetes-improving-control/> for more detailed information about treatments for **Diabetes: improving control**. People using this type of information say they understand the health problem and treatment choices more clearly, and why one treatment is better for them than another. They also say they can talk more confidently about their reasons for liking or not liking an option with health professionals, friends and family.

You can call our Decision Support service on 0845 450 5851 to speak to a trained Health Coach. The Health Coaches will assist you by:

- Providing you with information
- Helping you to understand your condition
- Recognise what is important to you regarding the outcome of treatment
- Identifying potential solutions
- Encourage you in discussing options with your family
- Transferring skills which will assist you in using the information and resources available to you
- Support you in building confidence in discussing your choice with your doctor
- You may find that this can be achieved in one telephone call with a Health Coach; however, if further calls are required to support you in reaching your decision the Health Coach will schedule these with you.