



# Ask about your diabetes medicines

This guide is to help you get the best  
from your diabetes medicines.



This guide is to enable you to get the best from your diabetes medicines.

We know that many people with diabetes do not get the information they need about their medicines. It's important that you are as involved as you want to be in decisions about your treatment so you should be able to ask the questions that will give you the information you need.

All of your medicines will come with a patient information leaflet and this may help to answer some of your questions.

Healthcare professionals also want you to be involved in treatment choices so they welcome questions.

This booklet contains questions that you can ask the people treating you – your doctor, nurse or pharmacist. Of course you can ask them anything you like: these are just examples to prompt you. Use this booklet to write a list of your own questions.

# Ask about your diabetes medicines

Don't feel that you have to ask all of your questions when you next see your doctor, nurse or pharmacist. You can always make another appointment, or speak to them by telephone, if you want to discuss things further.

**If you need more information,** you can contact:

**Diabetes UK Careline:** 0845 120 2960.

Open Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm

**Diabetes UK website:** [www.diabetes.org.uk](http://www.diabetes.org.uk)

It's important that you are clear about what any diabetes treatment means for you. If you are unsure, ask more questions – or ask for more time to think about it. There is no such thing as a stupid question if it helps you understand your medicines better and use them safely and effectively.

This guide is divided into three sections. Each section includes questions to ask if you are taking tablets or insulin.

## Thinking about treatment

Questions you can ask about diabetes treatment in general before you make any decisions

## Choosing treatment

Questions you can ask to help you choose the treatment that is best for you

## Having treatment

Questions you can ask once you've started taking your treatment

This guide was produced as part of an on-going partnership between Diabetes UK, Ask About Medicines, and The Association of the British Pharmaceutical Industry (ABPI). This partnership aims to create awareness and facilitate the understanding of the medicines used to treat diabetes amongst people with diabetes, carers and policy makers by encouraging people to ask questions and seek information about their medicines.

Ask About Medicines is the independent campaign to increase people's involvement in decisions about their use of medicines. **Ask About Medicines website:** [www.askaboutmedicines.org](http://www.askaboutmedicines.org)

# Thinking

Questions you can ask about diabetes treatment in general before you make any decisions

- Why do I need to start taking medicines?
- What will happen if I don't take these medicines?
- Why is it important to take these tablets?
- Will these cure my diabetes?
- Do I have to pay for my prescriptions?

## **Additional questions to ask if you are considering taking insulin**

- Why do I need to have injections?
- Can I take tablets instead?
- Does this mean my diabetes is getting worse?
- Does this mean I now have Type 1 diabetes?
- Is insulin safe?
- Will the injections hurt?

# Choosing

Questions you can ask to help you choose the treatment that is best for you

**It's important to know what your choices are so that you can make the right decision about your treatment. Your doctor, nurse or pharmacist will be able to help you make these decisions.**

- What different tablets are available?
- What are the side effects I should look out for?
- How likely are these to happen?
- What should I do if I get any of the side effects?
- Are there any alternatives to these tablets?
- Is it alright to take these tablets with the other tablets I am already taking?
- Can I take complementary medicines with these tablets?
- What happens if the tablets don't work for me?
- Will I need to take other tablets as well?
- Do I have to have any tests to see if the tablets are working?

## **Additional questions to ask if you have been offered insulin**

- How do I do the injections?
- How big is the needle?
- How many injections will I have to have each day?
- Where should I give my injections?
- When do I have to have my injections?
- Is it better to have 2 or 4 injections a day?
- What is the difference between the insulin I take during the day and the insulin I take at night time?
- What are the side effects of insulin?
- How likely are these to happen?
- Are there any alternatives to injections that would be suitable?
- Would an insulin pump be suitable for me?
- Would inhaled insulin be suitable for me?

# Taking

Questions you can ask once you've started taking your treatment.

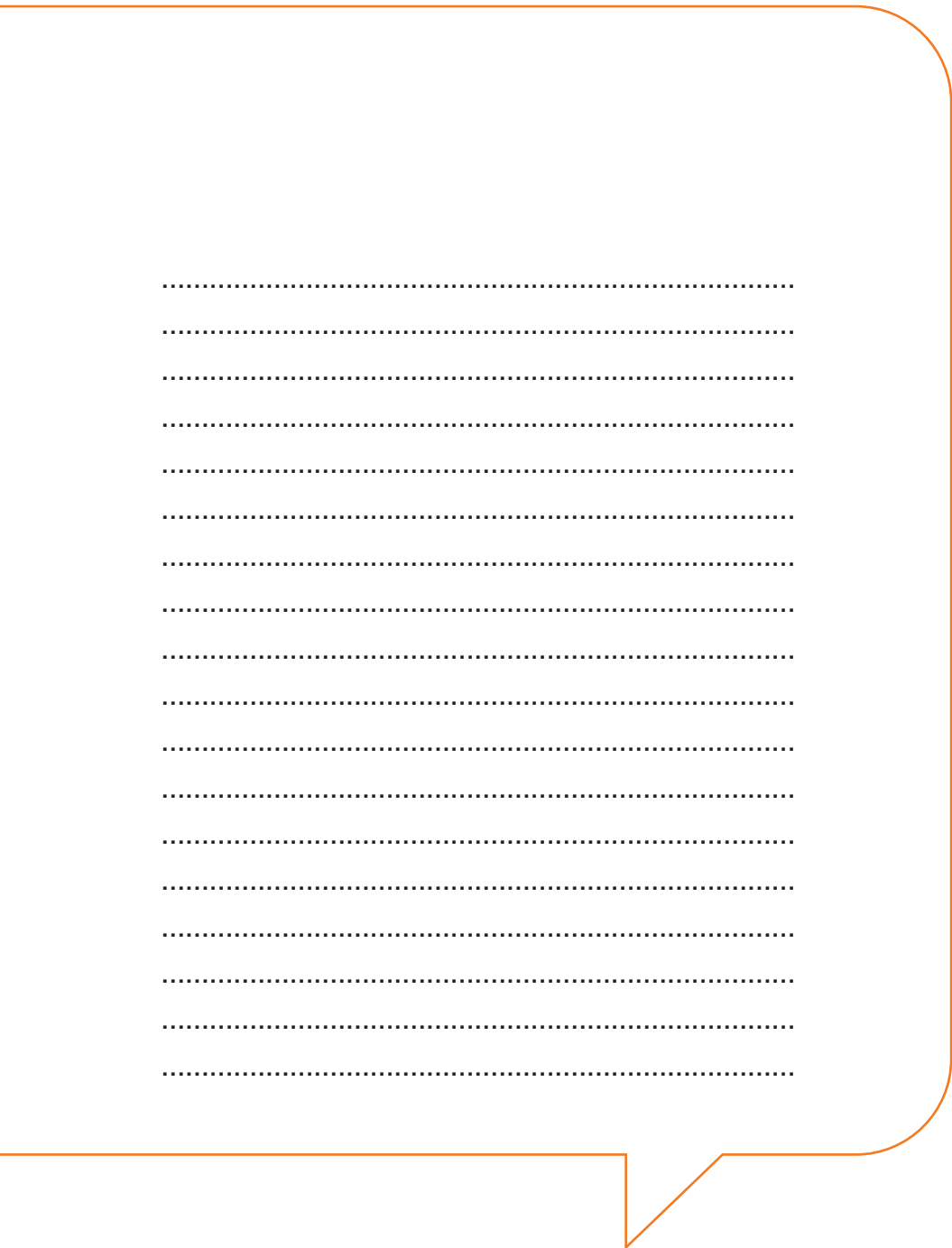
- What do the tablets actually do?
- Why do I need to keep taking them?
- Do I need to keep taking them if I feel well?
- Do I still have to follow the same diet?
- Do I have to avoid any foods or alcohol?
- How long will I need to take these tablets?
- How quickly will they start working?
- When should I take these tablets?
- Do I have to take these tablets with food?
- What should I do if I forget to take a dose?
- If I am ill, should I continue to take these tablets?
- How will I know if I am taking the right dose?
- Will I have to change the dose of the tablets I am taking?
- How should I store my tablets?
- Where can I get more information about my tablets?
- What is the generic and brand name of my tablets? (for example paracetamol and Panadol)



## **Other questions to ask if you are taking insulin**

- Will I have to change the dose I take – and if so, how often?
- What should I do if I forget to take an injection?
- How should I store my insulin?
- What's the difference between human, animal and analogue insulins?
- Where can I get more information about my insulin?





.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

For more information about individual medicines visit the Medicine Guides website at [www.medguides.medicines.org.uk](http://www.medguides.medicines.org.uk) or look in the diabetes treatment section of the NHS Directs health encyclopedia at [www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk](http://www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk)

This guide was produced by Diabetes UK and Ask About Medicines, with an unrestricted educational grant from the ABPI, under the terms of the Ask About Medicines sponsorship policy.

