

# NHS Diabetes Advice Helpline – FAQs and materials

## What it is and who is it for?

The NHS Diabetes Advice helpline is provided by NHS England and NHS Improvement in response to disruption to normal services due to the COVID-19 pandemic and response.

The helpline is for adults living with diabetes who use insulin to manage their condition and require advice from a team of clinical advisors.

Where routine care has been disrupted, the helpline can provide clinical advice to help them understand how to effectively manage their diabetes.

## Why has it been set up?

It has been set up as an additional option for people to access clinical advice about diabetes where the patient's query is non-critical and where access to routine care teams and advice is disrupted due to the COVID-19 pandemic and response.

It is not intended to replace routine or emergency care, and these should remain the primary routes to access advice and treatment where possible.

## How do patients access it?

The advice line is accessible via Diabetes UK's Helpline on 0345 123 2399. It is open Monday to Friday from 9am – 6pm (excluding bank holidays). If the patient needs clinical advice, they will be transferred to a clinical advisor who will assist them.

## What clinical advice will the helpline provide?

The NHS Diabetes Advice helpline supports adults living with any type of diabetes who use insulin to manage their condition and require clinical advice on topics such as: Hyperglycaemia, Hypoglycaemia, sick day rules and missed injections.

However, the service is not intended to replace routine care, support paediatric patients or support pregnant patients. These patients are advised to contact their own doctor or care team.

### **Who are the clinical advisors?**

The NHS Diabetes Advice helpline clinical advisors are volunteers. They are all health professionals with expertise in diabetes and an appropriate clinical registration. All of the advisors are clinically trained and competent.

### **Should I promote this to my patients?**

You can promote this to your patients if you feel that there is a local need for this service which is specifically aimed at people who are managing their diabetes with insulin and provides clinical advice on topics such as: Hyperglycaemia, Hypoglycaemia, sick day rules and missed injections.

### **Has the service been tested?**

Yes – the NHS Diabetes Advice helpline was open between May and October 2020.

### **How long will the service be available?**

The NHS Diabetes Advice helpline will be available until mid-March 2021. Continued provision will be reviewed based on an assessment of service pressures and ongoing need for the helpline.

### **Is the service available in other languages?**

The helpline is available in other languages through an interpreting service that the Diabetes UK Helpline advisors can arrange once you are through to a member of their team.

### **[Need more information?]**

If you need more information, please contact [england.digitaldiabetes@nhs.net](mailto:england.digitaldiabetes@nhs.net).

**[Template letter/email from GP Practice or Diabetes specialist team]**

<Address, Post code>

**NHS Diabetes Advice – Helpline during the COVID-19 pandemic**

Dear <name>

We are writing to all insulin-treated patients with diabetes that are seen by our [practice / diabetes specialist team] to let you know that NHS England and NHS Improvement have launched a new helpline in response to disruption to normal services due to the COVID-19 pandemic and response.

The service is for adults living with diabetes who use insulin to manage their condition and require advice from a team of clinical advisors.

Where routine care has been disrupted, the helpline is available for clinical advice to help you understand how to effectively manage their diabetes.

The helpline is not designed to replace the routine care you receive from your usual care team – but if for any reason you can't get hold of us then the helpline is there to help.

The helpline is staffed by volunteers. They are all clinically trained healthcare professionals with expertise in diabetes.

You can access NHS Diabetes Advice helpline via Diabetes UK's Helpline on 0345 123 2399 Monday-Friday from 9am-6pm.

Yours sincerely,

[Name, Practice / Diabetes Specialist service]

**[Copy for newsletter or bulletin]**

**NHS Diabetes Advice helpline**

NHS England and NHS Improvement have launched a new helpline in response to disruption to normal diabetes services due to the COVID-19 pandemic and response.

The service is for adults living with diabetes who use insulin to manage their condition and require clinical advice.

Where routine care has been disrupted, the helpline is available for clinical advice to help you understand how to effectively manage your diabetes.

You can access NHS Diabetes Advice helpline via Diabetes UK's Helpline on 0345 123 2399 Monday-Friday from 9am-6pm.

*[86 words]*

**[Example text to insulin-treated people with diabetes]**

The NHS Diabetes Advice helpline is now available via Diabetes UK to help insulin-treated people with diabetes during the COVID-19 pandemic. If you need clinical advice and can't reach your usual care team, call 0345 123 2399 (Monday-Friday, 9am-6pm).

*[39 words, 251 characters]*