



NHS Tayside Diabetes Managed Clinical Network Patient Information Leaflet

What Happens at a Hospital Diabetes Clinic

Most people with Type 1 diabetes attend a hospital diabetes clinic. People with Type 2 diabetes will mostly attend their GP but some may need to attend the hospital diabetes clinic or both.

At the hospital clinic, blood samples are always taken and tested for:

Haemoglobin A1c (HbA1c). This is done at every visit and tells how well controlled your diabetes has been over the previous 3 months. Good control means an HbA1c of 6.5% or 48mmol/mol. This is equivalent to keeping your blood glucose between 4 and 7 before meals.

Creatinine or eGFR. This is checked yearly and tells us how well your kidneys are working.

Cholesterol. This tells how much 'fat' is in your blood. It is checked yearly or more often if it is high.

Please wear sleeves that can be rolled up above the elbow. The blood sample is usually tested while you wait and takes about 20 minutes. This allows the Doctor to decide about treatment when you are seen. Your GP can also do these tests, but the results are not available while you wait.

You will also be asked to bring along a urine sample that has been collected first thing in the morning. This is tested for:

- Glucose
- Ketones and signs of infection
- Protein (called microalbumin). High levels of microalbumin are associated with a greater risk of developing some complications of diabetes and with high blood pressure. This can be helped with tablets called 'ACE Inhibitors'.

At your first visit your height is measured.

At every visit your weight and blood pressure are checked.

Eye Screening

As part of the national screening programme an annual invitation for eye screening will be sent to you. This will be a separate appointment.

Yearly eye checks are vital as early detection can help protect your sight.

Even if your eyes are examined by your local optometrist, diabetes clinic or GP you will still be sent an invitation to have your eyes screened. However, if you are already attending a hospital eye clinic you may not need to be screened at this time.

You will be sent clear instructions on where and when to attend for screening. If the time and/or date are not suitable contact the number shown on the invitation letter as soon as possible so that a new appointment can be made.

Each appointment usually takes about 10 minutes, during which your vision will be checked and a photograph will be taken of your eyes. It may be necessary to put eye drops into your eyes so that a good photograph can be taken, in which case your appointment will take longer than usual.

If eye drops are used, you may become temporarily sensitive to bright lights, so you may wish to bring sunglasses.

Eye drops may also cause blurred vision for several hours therefore it is not advisable to drive after an appointment and you should make alternative arrangements for getting home safely.

REMEMBER – the law states that you should not drive if you cannot read a number plate clearly from 25 yards.

Foot Screening

Your Feet will also be examined at least once a year. This is to find out if the circulation is satisfactory and if the nerves to your feet are working normally. Please wear shoes and socks that allow easy access to your feet.

All of these tests take time but they are essential for the doctor to properly assess you. You may also need to see other members of the Diabetes Team. Please give yourself plenty of time to do all of this.

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