

Managing to live with Type 2 diabetes



Hi, my name is Guy and I have been Type 2 diabetic for about 8 years.

My journey started when I received a call from my surgery to discuss some results following a recent age-related health checkup. My wife had already been diagnosed as Type 2 diabetic so I was half expecting the same diagnosis.

During the early days of coming to terms with this condition, I was offered a chance to attend an "X-PERT" course in Bexley - a six week course where I learnt what diabetes is, how to manage the condition, advice on healthy eating, understanding food labeling and how to switch to a healthier lifestyle. The big thing for me was understanding that it is not just sugars that might cause problems, but carbohydrates too.

The X-PERT course also runs annual refresher updates in Bexley where you can revisit any of the areas of the condition which you have concerns about and get updated on the current medical advice.

One of the biggest risk factors for T2 diabetes is lifestyle, being overweight and not getting enough exercise. To try and address this I have joined "[Walking for Health](#)" and have become one of their volunteer walk leaders. Walking for health is what it says on the tin: a group of people who walk between 2 and 4 miles around the borough of Bexley. Through this group I have made many new, supportive and interesting friends. I have also returned to cycling, which I now do as a hobby and as a cycle trainer for young people. I attend a cardiac gym session when I can, and I love playing a weekly hour long session of Badminton with friends.

My biggest challenge is trying to manage my weight. Although not excessively overweight, I would benefit from losing a few pounds, and as most people will know, this can be challenging and a daily battle. As a family with two T2 diabetics – and my son's partner is T1 - we try to avoid fast foods and pre-prepared meals. Most days my wife will cook meat and vegetables, aiming for a balanced diet.

To try and assist others who suffer with diabetes, I have joined the Bexley Diabetes support group where I am a member of the management committee. This group meets

on the third Friday of each month at Geddes Place. We have regular presentations from experts and the group is friendly, social and supportive of its members who manage their diabetes. I am also a member of my GP's Patient participation group where I have a special interest in ensuring that diabetic care and services are the best they can be..

I now keep an excel spreadsheet of all my 6 monthly results so that I can keep an overview of how I am coping with the management of this condition.

All in all I am very happy with the services provided by the NHS. Managing diabetes is not easy and I have good days and bad days, but on the whole I manage the condition and have been relatively stable with all my test results.