

Driven round the bend?

Essential advice for people
with diabetes from Accu-Chek



Getting behind the wheel

- ✓ **Having diabetes doesn't mean you have to give up driving**
- ✓ **However, if you intend to drive it's important you know the law**
- ✓ **Restrictions apply to some driving jobs, but each case is assessed individually**
- ✓ **Keeping your blood glucose controlled will improve your chances of getting a licence**

For more about the range of free diabetes information booklets, call Accu-Chek Customer Careline:

0800 701000 (UK)

1 800 709600 (ROI)

or log on to

www.accu-chek.co.uk

www.accu-chek.ie

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ACCU-CHEK®



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of Advanced Motorists

Driving and diabetes

...I practically live in my car, I don't know what I'd do without it.

Helen, 31

Whether you drive for fun, convenience or work, having diabetes doesn't mean you have to give up driving - but it does mean you have to be well prepared and well controlled. There are, however, some important legal and health issues you should know about.

This booklet will help highlight some of the key issues you may face and will also give you a few hints and tips to keep you on the road and hazard-free.

So, read on and happy motoring!

What does the DVLA/DVA need from me?

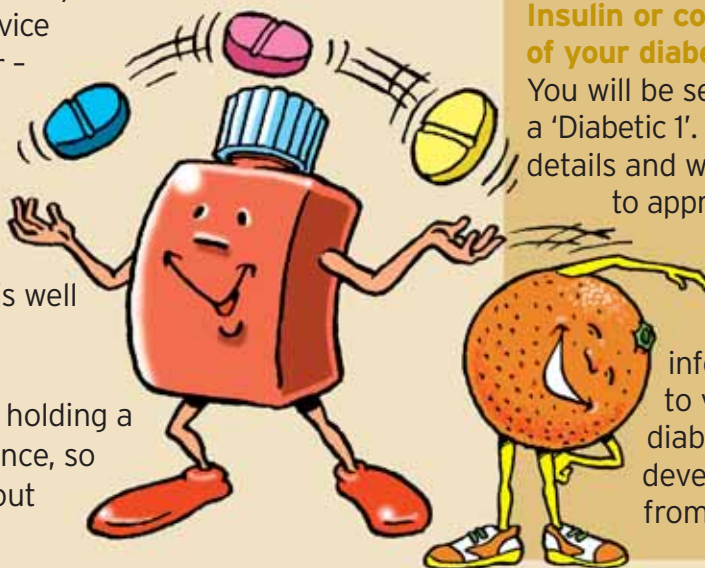
...being turned down is a bit of a worry, but I guess they have to keep the roads safe.

Marcus, 19

The Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) and the Driver and Vehicle Agency (DVA) in Northern Ireland has an obligation to make sure the roads are safe for people to use. To do this, the DVLA/DVA asks a series of health related questions when you apply for a licence and may decide to seek medical advice from your doctor -

this doesn't mean you'll be refused a licence.

If your diabetes is well controlled there shouldn't be any objection to you holding a valid driving licence, so read on to find out how to apply.



Vehicle licence application form

Answer YES to the question relating to diabetes.

Provide details of the treatment you are on:

Insulin or complications of your diabetes

You will be sent another form called a 'Diabetic 1'. It will request your GP's details and will ask your consent to approach your doctor.

Tablets/diet

You will be sent a letter explaining that you must inform the DVLA of changes to your treatment or any diabetes complications you may develop, for example, a transfer from tablets to insulin.



What does the law say?

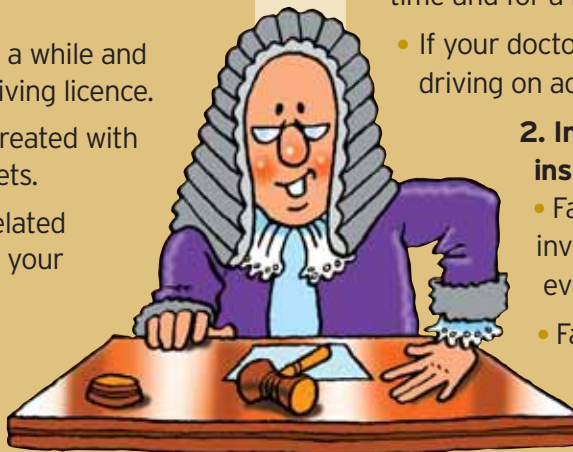
...it's better to know the law,
know where you stand and not
get caught out.

Mike, 45

If you have diabetes and intend to drive, the law requires you do the following things:

1. Inform the DVLA (UK) or DVA for Northern Ireland

- If you've had diabetes for a while and are now applying for a driving licence.
- If your diabetes is being treated with insulin or insulin and tablets.
- If you develop diabetes-related problems that may affect your ability to drive safely, for example, eyesight complications or loss of sensation in the legs.
- If you have frequent episodes of Hypoglycaemia
- If your medical condition worsens or if you are starting on Insulin.
- Treatment with diet alone or diet and tablets does not have to be declared to the DVLA. However, your insurance company may



specifically request a letter from the DVLA regarding your condition. In Northern Ireland, your condition must be declared to DVA if applying for a licence for the first time and for a renewal.

- If your doctor has advised you against driving on account of your diabetes

2. Inform your insurance company

- Failure to do so can invalidate your cover in the event of a claim
- Failure to notify DVLA or DVA can also affect your insurance cover.

If you ride a motorcycle or scooter, the same rules apply.



You and your licence

...I reapply every few years, but I'm well controlled so it's just a formality really.

Brody, 33

The DVLA/DVA issues two different types of driving licence according to individual circumstances.

Restricted licences

Valid for one, two, or three years. If you are treated with insulin you will be issued one of these.

They are renewed free of charge and you will receive a reminder through the post just before the expiry date.



Till 70 licences

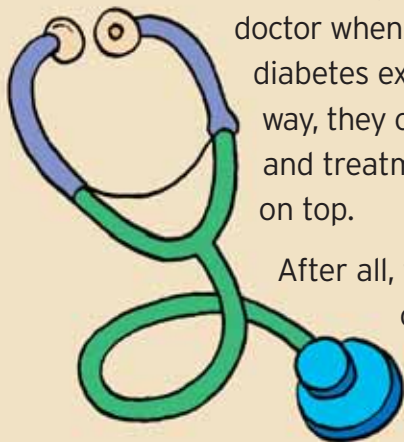
Valid until you are 70 years of age. If you are treated with diet alone or diet and tablets you will receive one of these. So long as your diabetes doesn't develop complications or your treatment changes, this licence will only need renewing when you are 70 years old. Then, like everyone else over 70, you will be switched to a restricted licence and charged a fee.



Your doctor and special health issues

It's usual for your doctor to provide an overview of how well you're doing based on your individual circumstances and blood glucose control. This gives the DVLA/DVA guidance when assessing your ability to drive.

Be clear and open with your doctor when discussing your diabetes experiences. That way, they can offer advice and treatment to keep you on top.



After all, the better your control, the more chance you'll have of getting a licence and the safer you'll be on the road - for you and other road users.

Remember, it's not necessarily the treatment you receive that could limit your access to a driving licence, but the control you have over your blood glucose.

Eyesight



Clearly, good eyesight is vital for safe driving. You need to be able to judge distance and also have a 120° field of vision. Talk to your doctor or eye specialist for more information.

Pregnancy

If you develop diabetes while pregnant and have to start on insulin, you must inform the DVLA/DVA immediately.

If your control is good, you should be able to continue driving on your current licence. Contact the DVLA/DVA again six weeks after your baby has been delivered to have your status looked at again.



Large vehicles & driving for work

...I drive a lot for work,
so where does that leave me?

Fred, 40

Lorry and bus drivers must have a special license. Patients treated with diet alone or tablets and have no diabetes -

related problems are able to hold this license. You need to tell the

DVLA/DVA if you are taking certain tablets which

increase your risk of hypos. You should discuss this with your diabetes care team. If you are on insulin or are just starting, you are generally not permitted to drive these vehicles. There are a few exceptions and you should contact the DVLA/DVA or doctor for advice. Rules for minicab licences vary however the DVLA/DVA recommend that local authorities should follow the rules for lorries and buses.



If your work involves driving abroad, ask your doctor for advice and check with your insurance company to see if you're covered.

In any case, if you are driving, it's best you test regularly, take the necessary precautions and follow good driving practice for people with diabetes.

Remember, cutting corners with your diabetes care can put your life and the lives of others in danger.



Driving and hypoglycaemia

Hypoglycaemia is a common worry for people with diabetes, but with the right preparations it can be properly managed. If you follow good driving practice for people with diabetes there shouldn't be any problems. Keep snacks in your vehicle, test before starting and every two hours during your journey, and take regular breaks. Some diabetes tablets could make you hypo - check with your doctor or nurse if you're unsure about yours.



NEVER drink alcohol and drive.

How to spot a hypo

- Sweating and hunger
- Shakiness and heart flutter
- Faintness or dizziness
- Nausea or headache
- Blurred vision or tingly lips



What to do if you feel hypo while driving

- Stop driving as soon as it is safe to do so and secure your vehicle
 - Do not start again until the symptoms have gone
- Take glucose tablets, biscuits or a sugary drink
 - Eat some carbohydrate
- If it is safe to do so, take the keys out of the ignition and move to the passenger or rear seat until the symptoms have completely passed. Remember during a hypo you may seem to be drunk or on drugs which can cause confusion if you seem to be in charge of a vehicle.

If you're unable to sense when you are getting a hypo, you probably shouldn't be driving.

Getting to grips with insurance

...some companies really try it on, so it's definitely worth shopping around. Lisa, 26

You must inform your insurance company if you have diabetes otherwise if you have an accident you may not be covered. If you're worried how this will affect your premiums, don't be. With the introduction of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, there should be no increase in premiums unless there's evidence of increased risk in a particular group of people.

National records do NOT show people with diabetes to be at a higher risk than the rest of the population. However, you may find that individual companies use their own records to justify higher premiums. This can be challenged. If you need assistance, you can always call the Diabetes UK Careline on **0845 120 2960** or the Diabetes Federation of Ireland on **1 850 909 909**.



Accidents and diabetes

If you're hypo when you have an accident, the police may charge you with driving under the influence of a drug (insulin),

driving without due care and attention, or dangerous driving.

Testing your blood glucose regularly will help you stay in control,

but if you do have an accident, you need to:



1. Seek legal advice immediately

2. Inform the DVLA if you were having a hypo at the time

Taking an advanced driving course can teach you additional techniques to keep you safe and enjoying being on the road - and it may even lower your insurance premiums.

Further information on driving and diabetes:

Diabetes UK Careline

0845 120 2960

www.diabetes.org.uk

DVLA Medical Group

0870 600 0301

(Monday to Friday, 8am - 5.30pm
and Saturday 8am - 1.00pm)

DVLA

0870 240 0009

(Monday to Friday, 8am - 8.30pm
and Saturday 8am - 5.30pm)

Institute of Advanced Motorists (IAM)

0845 126 8600

www.iam.org.uk

Irish Advanced Motorists

056 7771778

www.irishadvancedmotorists.ie

***Royal Society for the Prevention
of Accidents (ROSPA)***

email: help@rospa.com

www.rospa.com

Republic of Ireland

In the Republic of Ireland, people with diabetes are required to attain a medical report when applying for a driving licence. In order to complete this report you will need to undergo a medical examination by a registered medical practitioner and then sign the declaration on the medical report in front of the GP.



The report, called a 'Medical Report D 501' can be obtained from a local

Motor Taxation Office or the Dublin City Council

Motor Tax Office

Block B

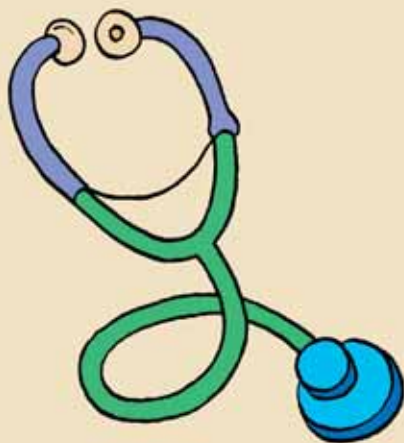
Blackhall Walk

Queen Street

Dublin 7

Telephone: (01) 222 2222

Email: motortax@dublincity.ie



Republic of Ireland

If you wish to drive vehicles in the Republic of Ireland, you will need to have medical supervision and therefore your fitness to drive may be certified for limited periods at a time. However if your diabetes is treated with insulin, you may be certified as being fit to drive vehicles in C1, C, D1, D, EC1, EC, ED1 or ED categories, only in exceptional circumstances. This is subject to certification by a consultant specialist with a special interest in diabetes or an endocrinologist and an annual medical review.

Further information can be obtained from your local county council, Motor Taxation Office and the Department of Transport, Driver Licensing Selection (www.transport.ie).

