

What is diabetes?

Australians are diagnosed with diabetes every day. About 20% (or 1 in 5) of older people have diabetes. According to the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 1.2 million (6%) of Australian Adults had diabetes in 2017–18. Type 2 diabetes is the most common form of diabetes. Other types of diabetes are type 1 diabetes and gestational diabetes (diabetes diagnosed in pregnancy).

- Diabetes is a group of conditions in which there is too much glucose (a type of sugar) in the blood. Diabetes is managed by maintaining a careful balance between food, medicine and physical activity.
- Blood glucose levels are regulated by insulin, a hormone made by the pancreas. In diabetes, the pancreas may not make enough insulin, or the insulin may not work properly (insulin resistance). This causes blood glucose levels to rise above the normal range and can lead to health problems, such as eye and kidney disease.

What is dementia?

Dementia is a brain disorder that affects thinking, emotions, behaviour, and the ability to perform everyday tasks. It can reduce quality of life and life expectancy.

The most common forms of dementia are Alzheimer's disease and vascular dementia.

- According to Dementia Australia, people with diabetes have an increased risk of developing dementia; however, most people with diabetes will not develop dementia.

The risk of developing dementia in the general population is around 10%, for people with diabetes this risk increases to around 20%.

- Keeping blood glucose levels within the target range, and maintaining a healthy weight and blood pressure can reduce the risk of developing dementia. Other healthy lifestyle choices, such as not smoking and staying physically and mentally active and socially engaged, also reduce the risk of dementia.
- Dementia is often under-diagnosed, especially in the early stages.

Dementia & Diabetes

For people who do not have diabetes, the risk of developing dementia is about 10%, for people with type 2 diabetes the risk is about 20%. The reason for this is not completely understood; it is likely to involve many different factors, including the following:

- High blood glucose levels (hyperglycaemia) can damage the cells of the body and the blood vessels, including cells and blood vessels in the brain.
- When blood vessels in the brain are damaged, brain cells may not get enough oxygen and nutrients to function properly and may die.
- Insulin resistance causes the body to produce higher levels of insulin to try to keep blood glucose levels within the normal range. The high levels of insulin can cause damage to blood vessels and cells in the brain.
- Diabetes may contribute to the build-up of proteins in the brain associated with Alzheimer's disease.



The Byron carer

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Byron Shire Respite Service is located at the Brunswick Valley Community Centre, South Beach Rd, Brunswick Heads.

www.byronrespite.com.au

Our incorporated non-government community based organisation is managed by a local committee and covers the shires of Byron, Ballina and Lismore.

NDIS Registered Provider

Respite care is delivered through our Flexible Respite, Day Respite and Social Support projects, with a person centred enablement approach across the respite continuum.

Telephone Nicole on:
02) 6685 1619
or Janine on: 02) 6685 1629

Email: service@byronrespite.com.au



Byron Shire Respite Service acknowledge and pay respect to the Arakwal people of the Bundjalung nation, the traditional owners of the land on which we live and care – and pay respect to the Elders past, present and emerging.

continued overleaf ►

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Signs and symptoms of diabetes include unexplained weight loss, not completing usual diabetes self-care tasks or making mistakes in these, poor management of blood glucose levels. Be familiar with the signs and symptoms of dementia, and help someone follow up any concerns as soon as possible.

● Some signs and symptoms of poorly managed diabetes are similar to signs and symptoms of dementia. If you notice a change in a person's behaviour or increased confusion, always consider both possible causes. Report any concerns or changes and make sure they are followed up.

● If someone with diabetes is diagnosed with dementia, their diabetes medicines and target blood glucose levels should be reviewed by a doctor. Simplified medicine routines and different blood glucose targets may be appropriate.

● Managing diabetes involves a number of daily tasks. Achieving the right balance of food, medicine and physical activity can be difficult, especially for people who have dementia. In the early stages of dementia, people with diabetes may still be able to manage daily tasks by following simple, regular routines and using written reminders and other strategies. As the dementia progresses an increasing number of tasks need to be done by other people.

Type 1 & 2 Diabetes

Type 1 diabetes accounts for 10% of all diabetes and is increasing

Type 1 diabetes is an auto-immune condition in which the immune system is activated to destroy the cells in the pancreas which produce insulin. We do not know what causes this auto-immune reaction.

Type 1 diabetes is not linked to modifiable lifestyle factors.

Hypoglycaemia

Hypoglycaemia (blood glucose below 4 mmol/L), often called a 'hypo', has been linked to a higher risk of dementia. People with dementia may not be able to identify when they are having a hypo or may not be able to report this to others.

If you are supporting a person with diabetes, you should know the signs of a hypo and how to deal with it promptly.

There is no cure and it cannot be prevented.

Type 2 diabetes accounts for 85% of all diabetes and is increasing.

It is associated with modifiable lifestyle risk factors and can be managed through lifestyle modifications and medication. **Type 2 diabetes** also has strong genetic and family related risk factors. As type 2 diabetes is commonly (but not always)

diagnosed at a later age, sometimes signs are dismissed as a part of 'getting older'. In some cases, by the time **type 2 diabetes** is diagnosed, the complications of diabetes may already be present.

Symptoms include:

- Being excessively thirsty
- Passing more urine
- Feeling tired and lethargic
- Always feeling hungry
- Having cuts that heal slowly
- Itching, skin infections
- Blurred vision
- Gradually putting on weight
- Mood swings
- Headaches
- Feeling dizzy
- Leg cramps

If you are a carer of someone with a diagnosis of diabetes or dementia, you may need additional education and training to provide appropriate support.

For more information, visit Diabetes Australia

at: <https://www.diabetesaustralia.com.au/>

Read the original transcript of this article at:

<https://www.dementia.org.au/sites/default/files/Worker%20Manual%20A4%20WEB.pdf>

BYRON SHIRE RESPITE SERVICE

Byron Shire Respite Service Inc. is supported by the Australian Government Department of Health. Visit www.health.gov.au

Our Vision Statement:

With a focus on caring, wellness and reablement, provide person centred support to people with diverse needs to enhance their quality of life and maintain a familiar lifestyle in the community and in their own homes.

Although funding for the Commonwealth Home Support Programme (CHSP) has been provided by the Australian Government, the material contained herein does not necessarily represent the views or policies of the Australian Government.

How much space do you need to feed yourself?

In the Northern Rivers, the simple answer is – not much!

Local gardener Diane Hart lives on a small suburban block on *terrible* clay soil but it is chock full of flowers, food, herbs, spices, tea plants. In fact, over 70 useful plants.

You don't need a lot of space to feed yourself, you just need to start planting. Di has a great website that gives us a practical guide to organic gardening, with new ideas and delicious seasonal recipes.

She lives on a small suburban block of 780m² and on a recent walk around the garden with her grandsons, counted 78 edible and useful plants – that include trees, shrubs, ground-covers, herbs, annuals and perennials.

These plants produce about 500 kilos of food a year. That is 500 kilos of healthy homegrown food that she knows is organic and has come out of soil that she's fed and nurtured, and it is right outside her backdoor. That means very little waste. Di says, 'what is left over simply goes back



into the soil to complete the cycle of life – compost, soil, seed, plant, fruit, compost – bingo!

In 2020, the International Year of Plant Health, what does Di think about Pests and Diseases?

'Working with Nature is a much better idea than waging war on it. Don't you think?', asks Di. 'Reaching for the spray should be the last resort because NONE of that stuff is good for us.'

'In an integrated garden like mine, with lots of flowers, bird baths, water dishes, and low shrubbery for the small birds, pollinators, beneficial insects and lizards to hide in, I really don't have much of a problem.' 'It's just a big restaurant out there and things take care of themselves. Nature's way.'

Plants Di can't do without

Di calls these her 'Cornerstone plants'. The ones that just keep going and feed her all the year. They have to be easy to grow, relatively pest free and adapted to my climate and soil conditions. Di puts bananas, papaya and citrus in this group. She eats bananas and citrus every day and her papaya provide her with year round fruit, mostly green, for making green papaya salads, so she always has something to pick and eat.

For growing tips and great recipes, visit Di's website at: <https://growfoodslowfood.com>

Need support?

- **Carer Gateway** telephone: 1800 422 737 for information about planned and emergency respite and other carer supports. www.carergateway.gov.au
- **My Aged Care** telephone: 1800 200 422 for information about the Australian Government's aged care system and services. www.myagedcare.gov.au

If you require emergency respite, please call:

1800 059 059 (24hrs)

Far North Coast Commonwealth Respite & Carelink Centre

- **Telephone Nicole at Byron Shire Respite Service Inc. to discuss your role as a carer.** telephone: 02) 6685 1619
- **Local carers support group, the Byron Carers Coffee Club held on the 2nd Monday of every month.** telephone: 0412 911 613
- **National Dementia Helpline** telephone: 1800 100 500
- **Carers Counselling Service** telephone: 02) 6628 6416
- **Carers NSW** telephone: 1800 242 636
- **Sandra Kimball Counselling** telephone: 0458 175 962
- **National Continence Helpline** telephone: 1800 330 066
- **NSW Elder Abuse Helpline** telephone: 1800 628 221

Aids:

- **Byron Ballina Home Maintenance and Modification Service 1/65 Centennial Circuit, Byron Bay** telephone: 02) 6685 7312
- **Bright Sky Cards for Continence Aids Payment Scheme (CAPS)** telephone: 1300 886 601

Need Transport?

- **Byron Shire Respite Service** can assist with transport to medical appointments. Telephone Janine: 02) 6685 1629
- **Byron Shire Limousines** telephone: 02) 6685 5008 Travel for medical appointments free with travel voucher or for Veteran and Widow Gold Card holders:
- **Brunswick Limousines** telephone David on: 0412 855 747
- **Tweed Byron Ballina Community Transport** telephone: 1300 875 895

Tweed Byron Ballina Community Transport provide transport to medical appointments, weekly & fortnightly shopping outings & monthly social outings. The service is funded to support older people living at home independently or have a permanent disability or Indigenous Australians aged over 50 years. Phone Kathryn in the Byron office on: 1300 875 895 for transport to medical appointments or Amanda for any shopping bus or social bus enquiries.

Byron Shire Respite Service - Day Program Timetable

monday	tuesday	wednesday	thursday	friday
10am – 2:30pm centre-based day respite <i>dementia friendly</i>	10am – 3pm centre-based day respite <i>dementia friendly</i>	10am – 3pm centre-based day respite <i>dementia friendly</i> Bus outings Shopping & picnic days	10am – 3pm centre-based activities for older people	10am – 3pm centre-based day respite <i>dementia friendly</i>



Lunch, morning and afternoon tea is provided. The cost for the day including transport is \$22.00 (Fees subject to change).



For more information, please contact centre on (02) 6685 1921
Email: service@byronrespite.com.au

Tips to communicate with a person living with dementia

People with dementia retain their feelings and emotions even though they may not understand what is being said, so it is important to always maintain their dignity and self-esteem.

Caring attitude

Be flexible and always allow plenty of time for a response. Where appropriate, use touch to keep the person's attention and to communicate feelings of warmth and affection.

Ways of talking

- Remain calm and talk in a gentle, matter of fact way
- Keep sentences short and simple, focusing on one idea at a time
- Always allow plenty of time for what you have said to be understood
- It can be helpful to use orienting names whenever you can, such as "Your son Jack".

Body language

You may need to use hand gestures and facial expressions to make yourself understood. Pointing or demonstrating can help. Touching and holding the person's hand may help keep their attention and show that you care. A warm smile and shared laughter can often communicate more than words can.

The right environment

- Try to avoid competing noises such as TV or radio
- If you stay still while talking you will be easier to follow, especially if you stay in the person's line of vision
- Maintain regular routines to help minimise confusion and assist communication
- It is much less confusing if everyone who visits your loved-one uses the same approach.
- Repeating the message in exactly the same way is important for all the family and all carers.

To find out more, visit: <https://www.dementia.org.au>

March 21st is World Down Syndrome Day, which has been officially recognised by the United Nations since 2012.



On this day, people all around the world celebrate the lives and achievements of people with Down syndrome, creating a global voice, advocating for the rights, inclusion and wellbeing of people with Down syndrome.

Down syndrome is a genetic condition. It is not an illness or a disease.

Our bodies are made up of millions of cells. In each cell there are 46 chromosomes. Down syndrome is caused when there is an extra chromosome. People with Down syndrome have 47 chromosomes in their cells instead of 46. They have an extra chromosome 21, which is why Down syndrome is also sometimes known as trisomy 21.

Although we know how Down syndrome occurs, we do not yet know why it happens. Down syndrome occurs at conception, across all ethnic and social groups and to parents of all ages. It is nobody's fault. There is no cure and it does not go away.

Of every 700-900 babies born worldwide, one will have Down syndrome, although this number is lower in Australia. Down syndrome is not a new condition. People with Down syndrome have been recorded throughout history.

People with Down syndrome have:

- some characteristic physical features
- some health and development challenges
- some level of intellectual disability.
- Because no two people are alike, each of these things will vary from one person to another.

To learn more about Down Syndrome and how you can



Down Syndrome
Australia

get involved, visit:
[https://www.
down
syndrome.org.au](https://www.downsyndrome.org.au)