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Can you claim disability benefits if you have diabetes?

There's a lot to take in when you or someone you love is diagnosed with [diabetes](#). Finding out what benefits you might be entitled to may not be at the top of your to-do list, but getting financial support may help you in the future - so here's an overview of what help you may be able to get.

Is diabetes a disability?

If you can't manage your diabetes without insulin, medication or treatment, it is classed as a disability under the 2010 Equality Act - or if you live in Northern Ireland, the Discrimination Act 1995.

However, not everyone with diabetes who takes insulin or medication is eligible for a disability benefit. Whether you are entitled to financial benefits depends on the level of care you need to live and get around, rather than the type of diabetes you have.

What can I claim for?

If you have either type 1 or type 2 diabetes, you may be eligible for certain benefits, depending on the extent to which your condition affects your life.

Everyone in the UK with diabetes is entitled to free, regular eye checks from the age of 12, which screens for eye problems linked to diabetes, like [diabetic retinopathy](#). If you're on any medication for your diabetes, you'll receive free prescriptions.

It is rare for children under 12 to have eye problems linked to diabetes, so they are not included in the automatic diabetic screening programme on the NHS. However, it's still essential for children to have their eyes checked regularly and to do this, you can book an appointment with an optician or with your GP, who can help you access a specialist. All children and young people under 19 in full time education are entitled to free NHS eye tests

There are additional benefits available to those with diabetes related to disability and long-term health, such as if you need help or if you're unable to work. Whether or not you're eligible depends on factors like additional health issues and how much diabetes affects your day-to-day activities.

Those most likely to be eligible for benefits include: Young or elderly people, people with mental health issues such as depression, those with learning disabilities, or people who have serious complications as a result of their diabetes. Parents can also claim on behalf of children with diabetes.

Prescriptions

If you take insulin or other medication to control diabetes, you're eligible for an exemption certificate to pay for your prescriptions.

People in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland receive free prescriptions no matter how their condition is treated, but those in England who manage it through diet may not always be eligible.

If you don't use insulin or medicine to manage your condition, you may be free for NHS prescriptions if you meet these criteria:

Under 16 or over 60

Pregnant or have given birth in the last 12 months

War pensioner

A HC2 certificate (which provides help with health costs)

Named as receiving benefits like jobseeker's allowance

You may be able to pay less for your prescriptions if you buy a prescription prepayment certificate, which covers your prescriptions for a set price.

To apply for the exemption certificate, you'll need an FP92A form from your doctor, and get them to sign it - you can get at one of your [check-ups](#). The Medical Exemption Certificate lasts five years and you'll receive reminders to renew it.

Personal Independence Payment (PIP)

Personal Independence Payment (PIP) is gradually replacing the Disability Living Allowance (DLA) for people aged 16 to 64, for daily living and mobility benefits. Needs are assessed on a points basis and the tier of benefit you receive dictates how much benefit or care you receive.

Parents of children with diabetes who are under 16 may still be entitled to DLA. DLA may be available if your child needs more care and assistance than other children their age.

Attendance Allowance

If you are over 65, have diabetes and have specific care needs - for basic tasks or for your safety - you may be able to claim Attendance Allowance. There are two tiers available - higher and lower - depending on your specific care needs.

Carer benefits

If you care for someone with diabetes who has a disability benefit or another kind of benefit, you may be able to claim Carers' Allowance. However, you'll need to be providing more than 35 hours care a week.

Pension credit

This is a means-tested benefit available to people reaching minimum age criteria - those with a disability or care needs are more likely to be eligible.

Universal credit

This is a monthly payment for people who are on a low income or out of work. For most people, universal credit has replaced the benefits below:

Employment and Support Allowance: Anyone with an illness or disability that affects their ability to work may be entitled to receive this benefit, which has replaced Income Support and Incapacity Benefit since 2008.

Housing Benefit: People on low income may be able to claim this benefit to help towards the cost of their rent. Qualifying criteria includes factors such as how much money you have in savings.

How do I find out what I can claim for?

The [Citizen's Advice Bureau](#) is a good starting place to check which benefits, if any, you may be entitled to. They can also help you if you think a wrong decision has been made and you want to appeal.

You can also find information and advice at:

- Disability Rights UK - their [website](#) has a range of useful guides.
- [Turn 2 Us](#) provide a range of information and guidance about benefits and grants.

To make a benefit claim, you need to visit [gov.uk](#), download the right claim packs, fill them out and submit them. The website also has lots of information about your rights and the various benefits available.

Diabetes UK have some useful [guidance documents](#) for applying for DLA and also have an advocacy service. If you need advice once a claim is submitted, find the relevant number through the government's [Disability Service Centre](#).

Some of the forms you need to fill out are complex and can feel daunting, but it's worth persisting as the benefits you could claim can make a difference to your life.

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