



Embracing technology

"I now feel in control of my diabetes"
60-year-old Kathryn Robinson from Bishop Auckland, County Durham was diagnosed with Type 2 diabetes over 20 years ago.

Her journey started after visiting a pharmacy pop-up clinic testing for diabetes and high blood pressure, where she was advised to see a doctor. Kathryn had already been visiting her healthcare provider for quite some time with repeated bouts of thrush – a key indicator of diabetes¹, and after doing some tests, they found that her blood sugar levels were high.

However, the diagnosis didn't come as a shock to Kathryn. She said: "My father and grandmother both had Type 2 diabetes; and my great-grandmother died from chronic exhaustion – which looking back now, could have been a sign of diabetes – and my cousin passed away from diabetes complications at the age of 69."

Kathryn found the initial diagnosis challenging and was told by the doctor to stop putting sugar in her tea, coffee and cereal. She was given some material to read about the condition and told to lose weight – something she'd struggled with for a few years.

She said: "I was first prescribed metformin, a diabetes medication, and I continued with this for 18 years. I eventually moved onto two units of basal insulin a day, which then increased to four units. As my condition progressed, the nurse said I would need to increase my insulin, however, she recommended I tried Abbott's FreeStyle Libre 2 system first, to see if I could manage my glucose levels.

Following a one-month trial, I was able to understand the impact different foods would have on my glucose levels.

Insights that improve my health

"Following a one-month trial, I was able to understand the impact different foods would have on my glucose levels – cheese scones and afternoon tea don't work for me! It also led me towards making healthier food choices, for example, I now opt to have natural yogurt with seeds and a small amount of fresh fruit for breakfast, instead of a traditional breakfast cereal.

"Not only have these insights led to improvements in my health, but my husband who is also living with diabetes has managed to stabilise his blood sugar levels by following the same diet.

"I've also been able to see how exercise can help manage the condition. My weight had increased from 9st 10lbs to 10st 5lbs before I started using the FreeStyle Libre 2 system, however, I've now dropped down to 9st 3lbs, and I'm managing my weight easily."

When Kathryn first started monitoring her levels, her HbA1c readings were at 69 mmol/mol. Her levels then dropped to 56 mmol/mol, and after just four months of using the FreeStyle Libre 2 system, Kathryn was able to come off insulin under the guidance of her healthcare team, as her HbA1c levels had dropped to within recommended guidance (48 mmol/mol (6.5%) or below).²

According to Diabetes UK, an estimated 6.4 million people in the UK are at an increased risk of Type 2 diabetes, which is the most common type of diabetes, based on their blood sugar levels, with 1.2 million people expected to be living undiagnosed with the condition³.

As Kathryn progressed on her diabetes journey, she became more aware of the stigma attached to the condition, which included comments at work based on stereotypes and general ignorance.





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With the FreeStyle Libre 2 system, my nurse can also see my readings on her computer⁴.

She said: “There were a lot of misconceptions about Type 2 diabetes when I was first diagnosed. People assume you are or have been overweight – and don’t exercise – but that isn’t always the case. I was 11 and a half stone when I was diagnosed.

“One example of when I experienced others’ judgement was when I took part in a team wellbeing session at work, and during the meeting a gentleman said that people with diabetes were all lazy and didn’t look after themselves. At the end of the session, I decided to address this with the person directly, and called out his behaviour. He was apologetic, however, I wanted to make sure that I challenged this stereotypical misconception to raise awareness around the impact of stigmatising behaviour.”

As Kathryn continued learning how to manage her condition, she praised her healthcare team, stating how supportive they had been throughout her diabetes journey.

She said: “As time has gone on, the support from my healthcare team has been fantastic. With the FreeStyle Libre 2 system, my nurse can also see my readings on her computer⁴, as there is an option to share your data with your healthcare team.

“As a result, I’ve felt very looked after for a long time by my ‘support team’ as I like to call them – they are fabulous.”

In June 2022, National Institute for Health & Care Excellence (NICE) published a set of updated guidelines making glucose sensors available to selected people with Type 2 diabetes who administer multiple daily injections of insulin.⁵

“It’s very discreet and has given me so much more confidence. I like to view my Time in Range and try to stay in the green with 80%+ and less than 5% in the dark orange. I also like the notes feature too – so I can keep track of my food, my walks, and my exercise levels.

“The benefits that I’ve gained from using the FreeStyle Libre 2 system are innumerable, which is why I decided to self-fund the device. It’s helped in so many ways, for example, I love driving, so I bought myself a sports car as a treat. I’m always aware of how my condition could affect me and therefore impact others on the road, if my glucose levels aren’t where they need to be – but now, I can easily check my glucose reading before I get in the car, to make sure I’m safe to drive.⁶

“I couldn’t live without it. For me, it was worth the investment versus the costs of any diabetes complications – I can’t put a price on my health. The sensor gives you a chance to understand why it’s so important to manage your diabetes and shows you in real-time the impact small changes can have.”

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The FreeStyle Libre 2 system has definitely changed my life. It’s educational and provides me with a constant learning curve with real-time information that I can act upon immediately to feel in control of my diabetes.

Disclaimer: The information provided is not intended to be used for medical diagnosis or treatment. Please consult your healthcare professional about your diabetes management. Individual symptoms, situations and circumstances may vary. 1. <https://www.diabetes.org.uk/diabetes-the-basics/diabetes-symptoms>. 2. <https://www.diabetes.org.uk/guide-to-diabetes/managing-your-diabetes/hba1c>. 3. <https://www.diabetes.org.uk/about-us/about-the-charity/our-strategy/statistics>. 4. The LibreView data management software is intended for use by both patients and healthcare professionals to assist people with diabetes and their healthcare professionals in the review, analysis and evaluation of historical glucose device data to support effective diabetes management. The LibreView software is not intended to provide treatment decisions or to be used as a substitute for professional healthcare advice. 5. <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng28>. 6. The DVLA (Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency) has permitted the use of Flash Glucose Monitoring systems for the purpose of driving with Group 1 drivers. Drivers using the FreeStyle Libre 2 system must get a confirmatory finger prick glucose level in the following circumstances: if their glucose level is 4.0mmol/L or below; if they have symptoms of hypoglycaemia; if their readings are not consistent with their symptoms; if they have become hypoglycaemic or have indication of impending hypoglycaemia. Flash Glucose Monitoring systems are not legally permitted for the purposes of Group 2 drivers. More information at Diabetes and driving – GOV.UK (www.gov.uk). © 2024 Abbott. The sensor housing, FreeStyle, Libre, and related brand marks are marks of Abbott. ADC-100431 v1.0 12/24.

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