

# Regaining control – the role of real-time feedback in diabetes

**Retired police officer and now driver and tour guide, Ron, lives with Type 2 diabetes.**

He was originally diagnosed with late onset Type 1 diabetes in 2006, aged 53.


Talking about his diagnosis, Ron said: “I was seen by my GP who told me to drive to the Cumberland Infirmary Carlisle (CIC); apparently, I was nearly in advanced stages of ketoacidosis.”

Ron was not aware that his symptoms indicated late-onset diabetes, and it was only after his diagnosis that he realised his declining eyesight and bladder control, which he dismissed at the time, had in fact been symptoms of diabetes.

Following his initial diabetes diagnosis, Ron’s medical team prescribed insulin and regular finger prick tests to manage his condition.

The retired police officer was re-diagnosed with Type 2 diabetes at age 56 and became reliant on an extensive treatment plan to manage his diabetes, including three types of oral diabetes medication.

Initially, Ron’s attitude towards his diagnosis had been one of worry and frustration, as it had come on suddenly, but it also brought a sense of relief. He said: “I was relieved that I had a diagnosis but scared because of the dire warnings I received. I initially thought I was going to die early and suffer the worst consequences.”



Now an  
advocate for  
managing  
diabetes  
with  
technology

Fortunately, his three children, all of whom are doctors, and his wife have been incredibly supportive and have encouraged the recommended lifestyle changes which include counting carbs and adopting a healthy diet and lifestyle—he now walks on a regular basis and finds opportunities to make healthier food swaps.

But his work as a driver and tour guide, on top of being an active grandfather, can make exercising and adjusting his diet challenging. Ron explained: “When on tour, I find diet is difficult to adhere to because I am away from home and have to rely on hotels, restaurants and takeaways. Mealtimes can be irregular, and dietary options can be difficult to come by.”

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Following his Type 2 diabetes diagnosis, Ron was introduced to Abbott's FreeStyle Libre 2 glucose monitoring system by his local pharmacist to help manage his glucose levels. Since using the glucose sensor Ron has seen significant improvement in the management of his condition and has overcome many of his challenges.

He said: "Until recently, I was not routinely thinking about the lifestyle choices I made and the impact it had on me as a person living with diabetes, but using the FreeStyle Libre 2 system has led me to focus more on my diet and instantly understand the impact of different foods and eating patterns on my glucose levels."

Ron adds: "The instant readings\* I get from the sensor enable me to adjust diet and activity in real time, and as a consequence my readings have improved which I'm sure will have wider health benefits and better outcomes in the future."

Although Ron does not qualify for NHS-prescribed sensors as a person living with Type 2 diabetes no longer using insulin, he has been self-funding the device due to the positive impact it has had in his life.

Now an advocate for managing diabetes with technology, believing it could help more people like him, Ron said: "I realise there would be increased costs for the NHS but from my experience, if more people living with Type 2 diabetes had access to this kind of tech, I really think it could make a big difference—not just for individuals, but for the NHS too. When you can see what's happening with your sugar levels in real time, it's so much easier to make changes and avoid complications down the line."

For Ron, this means peace of mind during long working days on the road when meals and breaks don't always come at regular times. And most importantly, it means that he can keep up with his grandchildren and remain present in the moments that matter most.



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\*Ron uses the FreeStyle Libre 2 system with a compatible smartphone. Glucose readings are automatically displayed in the FreeStyle LibreLink app only when the smartphone and the FreeStyle Libre 2 sensors are connected and in range. Sharing of glucose readings requires registration with LibreView.  
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