

## 11 Prevention of diabetes

### 11.1 Community awareness and primary prevention

Lifestyle changes aimed at weight control and increased physical activity are important objectives in the prevention of type 2 diabetes.

Priority should be given to the development of community-based healthy lifestyle programmes that focus on:

- maintaining a 'healthy' weight
- an active lifestyle which includes regular physical activity
- early identification of people at risk of developing type 2 diabetes and other non-communicable diseases such as hypertension and heart disease
- optimal maternal nutrition and weight maintenance
- introduction of healthy lifestyle programmes in the early school years. These should focus on the prevention of risk factors, which will predispose to non-communicable diseases in later life
- cessation of smoking.

The benefits of reducing body weight and increasing physical activity are not confined to diabetes; they also play a role in reducing heart disease and high blood pressure.

### 11.2 Secondary and tertiary prevention

Secondary and tertiary prevention are key to reducing the risk of costly diabetic complications, as well as their associated disabilities.

There is great potential for tertiary prevention (from ophthalmologists, vascular surgeons, and others) with regard to blindness, limb amputation and adverse pregnancy outcomes.

Rehabilitation and special assistance are required for those who develop disabling complications.

Overall, action taken early in the course of diabetes is more beneficial in terms of quality of life as well as being more cost-effective, especially if this action can prevent hospital admission.

The UKPDS and subsequent meta-analysis of CV outcome studies has established the importance of good glucose control as well as good blood pressure control in prevention of vascular complications.