

# Diabetes and driving

Victoria's vision is to create a safe system of roads, laws, vehicles, drivers and behaviour that supports and improves the safe movement of our community.

This includes supporting drivers to drive at any age so long as they are medically fit to do so.

Some medical conditions may affect the ability to drive safely. People with medical conditions are encouraged to speak to their doctor to understand their health condition and to discuss the potential impact on driving.

Drivers are required by law to notify Medical Review of any serious, permanent or long term illness, disability, medical condition or injury (or the effects of treatment for any of those things) that may affect their fitness to drive.

Each driver is reviewed individually by Medical Review to determine the outcome that is best for the safety of the individual and the community.

The purpose of this fact sheet is to explain how diabetes can affect your driving and your responsibilities as a driver.

## What is diabetes?

Diabetes is a condition that affects the body's ability to maintain healthy levels of glucose (sugar) in the blood. A hormone called insulin is required to convert glucose into energy. In people with diabetes, the body stops producing, or doesn't produce enough, insulin to convert glucose into energy, resulting in high blood glucose levels.

Diabetes can have serious impacts on a range of bodily functions, including vision, which is important for maintaining driving safety.

Regular eye examinations will help to monitor changes. Eye health practitioners can advise about minimising vision loss.

## How is diabetes treated?

There are three types of diabetes:

- **Type 1 diabetes** is an auto-immune disease and is managed by insulin injections during the day or an insulin pump.
- **Type 2 diabetes** can often be managed by diet and regular physical exercise. Medication and insulin may also be required.
- **Gestational diabetes mellitus** may occur during pregnancy and usually disappears after the birth of the baby. It can usually be managed by diet and regular physical exercise.

## What are the risks of driving with diabetes?

The main concern about driving and diabetes is the potential for an unexpected severe hypoglycaemic event. This occurs when a person's blood sugar level has dropped too low resulting in loss of consciousness or seizure.

Drivers should always follow the advice of their medical practitioner, including their individual circumstances and how they can best manage their diabetes when driving. This includes considering their own hypoglycaemic awareness and familiarising themselves with the warning signs of a downward trend in blood glucose.

Drivers should take appropriate preventative steps to help avoid a severe hypoglycaemic event whilst driving. For example, not driving if either blood glucose is at or less than 5 mmol/L or if, while wearing a continuous or flash glucose monitor, the predicted glucose level is showing downward trends into the hyperglycemia range (measured when the vehicle is parked).

Drivers should discuss with their doctor, or relevant diabetes health professional, preventative measures such as measuring blood glucose before driving and planning ahead for long drives. They should also have a management plan which aims to avoid a severe hypoglycaemic event if they develop awareness of symptoms of a mild hypoglycaemic event while driving, or when intending to drive.

## What are my responsibilities as a driver?

If you are applying for or already hold a current learner permit or driver licence and you have been diagnosed with diabetes, treated by glucose lowering agents and/or insulin, you are required by law to notify Medical Review.

Failure to notify could also affect your insurance cover.

You can use the notification form in this fact sheet. We recommend you send this to us by email [medicalreview@roads.vic.gov.au](mailto:medicalreview@roads.vic.gov.au) or fax 03 9854 2307. Make sure you keep the original for your own record. If you prefer to post, please mail to: GPO Box 2392, Melbourne Victoria 3001, and allow up to two weeks for delivery.

## Do I have to notify the medical review team if I have diabetes managed by diet and exercise alone and I have no other medical conditions?

No. A driver with diabetes treated by diet and exercise alone may drive without licence restrictions and is not required to notify us. You should be reviewed by your doctor periodically regarding the progression of diabetes. You should talk to your GP if you have any concerns.

## How will the medical review team assess my fitness to drive?

We determine your fitness to drive on a case by case basis in accordance with national medical standards (*Assessing Fitness to Drive, Austroads*), accessed at: [austroads.gov.au/drivers-and-vehicles/assessing-fitness-to-drive](http://austroads.gov.au/drivers-and-vehicles/assessing-fitness-to-drive). Medical advice and assessment outcomes are also considered.

To retain your driver licence you will be asked to provide a medical report.

Medical standards for commercial truck, taxi and bus licences are stricter than those for private licences.

Drivers may be required to provide a report from a diabetes specialist (endocrinologist) and an eye specialist.

If you can show that you can drive safely, but only under certain conditions, a conditional licence may be considered. A wide range of conditions are possible to maximise your safety and that of other road users.

## What are the medical standards for diabetes and driving?

After initial notification, periodic reviews are generally required as follows:

Diabetes and control	Requirement for medical licensing review*	
	Private vehicles	Commercial vehicles
Diabetes controlled by diet	No reports are required, however, must be monitored by your doctor	No reports are required, however, must be monitored by your doctor
Diabetes controlled by glucose lowering agents other than insulin	Every five years*	Every year
Insulin treated diabetes	Every two years*	Every year

\*The frequency of periodic reviews may vary depending on the type of diabetes and changes in other medical conditions.

## Where can I get further information?

For more information on how medical reviews work, including appealing a decision, visit [transport.vic.gov.au](http://transport.vic.gov.au)

For further information contact:

### Medical Review

**Email** [medicalreview@roads.vic.gov.au](mailto:medicalreview@roads.vic.gov.au)

**Fax** (03) 9854 2307

**Mail** Medical Review GPO Box 2392, Melbourne Victoria 3001

For more information about diabetes contact:

### Diabetes Victoria

**Tel** 1300 437 386

**Email** [mail@diabetesvic.org.au](mailto:mail@diabetesvic.org.au)

**Web** [diabetesvic.org.au](http://diabetesvic.org.au)

The National Diabetes Services Scheme can be accessed at: [ndss.com.au](http://ndss.com.au)

# Notification of diabetes to the medical review team

Please complete the **white** sections. Print in ink using BLOCK letters

## Licence holder details

Surname	Date of birth	D	D	M	M	Y	Y	Y	Y
First given name	Second given name								
Residential address	State	Postcode							

## Licence type (please tick a box)

- Applying for learner permit or licence Learner permit number
- Current learner permit Driver licence number
- Current driver licence
- Current commercial licence

Learner permit number									
Driver licence number									

## Diabetes and control (please tick a box)

- Diabetes controlled by glucose-lowering agents other than insulin
- Insulin-treated diabetes

## Notification by (please tick a box)

- Self
- Family
- Medical professional
- Other

**NB. All information provided in good faith is protected from disclosure. The information provided on this form will be held in confidence.**

### Return this completed form to:

Email: [medicalreview@roads.vic.gov.au](mailto:medicalreview@roads.vic.gov.au)  
Fax: (03) 9854 2307  
Mail: Medical Review  
GPO Box 2392, Melbourne Victoria 3001

The Department of Transport and Planning ABN 69 981 208 782 ('Department') and R&L Services Victoria Pty Ltd ABN 28 657 005 493 (as Trustee for the Victorian R&L Services Trust ABN 96 342 123 072), known as 'VicRoads' and acting on behalf of the Secretary to the Department and Safe Transport Victoria (ST Vic) ('we, us') collect personal information for registration and licensing purposes. This personal information will be handled by us as permitted or required by the applicable laws. This personal or health information may be disclosed to third parties, including our contractors and agents, or other bodies advising us on the medical fitness of drivers, occupational therapists, law enforcement agencies, other road and traffic authorities including Safe Transport Victoria and the Transport Accident Commission, courts and other agencies/persons authorised to obtain it under applicable laws. You are required by the Road Safety Act 1986, Marine Safety Act 2010 and their associated regulations to give this information.

Your failure to provide this information may result in your application not being processed, or your driver licence, learner permit, or marine licence records not being properly maintained, or your authority to drive on your interstate driver licence, learner permit, marine licence or overseas driver licence removed. For further information about our use of your personal and health information, and your rights to access it, go to: [dtp.vic.gov.au/privacy](http://dtp.vic.gov.au/privacy) or ST Vic's Privacy Policy at [safetransport.vic.gov.au/privacy-policy](http://safetransport.vic.gov.au/privacy-policy).

For other agencies or persons authorised to obtain your personal and/or health information, you should contact the agency directly for further information about their use and your rights of access to it.

I agree to the practitioner named on this form completing the report and forwarding it to the Department or VicRoads and agree to the use and disclosure of personal and health information contained in the form in accordance with the above statement. I agree to pay all the expenses connected with this report.