

### **Recommendations by Ms. Christine Mifsud, diabetic patient:**

1. I think that there should be more promoting of awareness regarding diabetes in all our communities. These should start from a very young age in schools and going on to other education levels. In our communities, entities should be encouraged to promote awareness regarding check-ups, monitoring and following of a healthy diet and exercise.
2. Persons should be tested, even if they do not show signs of diabetes, started from the overweight children and going on to older ages. Taking random HGT tests on World Diabetes Day has proved a success and this should not happen once a year, but this should be even made available, at a low cost or free of charge even from pharmacies of your choice.
3. 24 hr help should be given to those newly diagnosed, especially children and parents. A 24 hr helpline consisting of a nurse, doctor, and psychologist should be available in the early stages of diagnosis and when medication is started. This will avoid anxiety and the feeling of helplessness when one is newly diagnosed and needs help even in the simplest of tasks such administration of insulin or tablets, nutrition and diet, monitoring etc.
4. Psychological help should be offered and made obligatory to those who are newly diagnosed to help overcome the initial shock and to help accept changes this condition brings with it. This will avoid parents, partners and family members being over protective and hindering one's adaptation to a new lifestyle. This will also help persons accept this condition and take proper care of themselves and avoid future drastic side effects such as amputation and losing their eye sight or getting other related eye complications.
5. Pregnant women and their child should be given priority when it comes to services, monitoring in hospital and research funds should be allocated in this sector. Frequent follow ups must be given if needed. Many woman get diabetes in their pregnancy, but many manage to control it and they do not become diabetic after childbirth however these women must be checked periodically after their child is born.
6. The government must carefully plan a strategy to include all the above and the right service provided to the right person. A patient must be allowed to choose his own consultant and feel at ease and have a good relationship with his doctor. Outpatient visits should not take too long from one appointment to another, remember that not everyone can afford to go to a private consultant. This long time frame between one appointment and another could lead to complications going unnoticed. Prevention is much better than cure.
7. The media should be made to help in promoting awareness everyday through television educational clips and features in papers and on the internet's most visited sites.
8. The Malta Diabetes Association should play a main part in decision making, as it is in close contact with persons suffering from diabetes. It should be allocated funds to keep promoting.
9. Persons like me too should give their experience and play a good part in decision making, because at the end of the day, it is us who go through the system in hospital, who have to take the medication provided, who know what is best for a diabetic person. Politicians and Consultants, doctors and GPs and the general public all should work hand in hand to prevent diabetes and its complications and provide the right services for diabetics.

10. Medication, especially the blood glucose sticks should be given for free to all. Remember persons like me need triple the amount of strips given by the Government. When faced with financial difficulties and huge home loans and bills, one has to choose what to pay for and what not. Sometime health comes last in line. Opportunity cost is not a good option when it comes to health.
11. The old diabetes passport should be re-introduced as it used to keep record at all times of what tests the patient had to undergo during a year. This was of help to both doctors and patients.
12. Prevention is better than cure. If one follows a good routine of frequent visits, controls his monitoring, medication and exercise, one can prevent a controlled condition turning into a disability. This will effect persons in many drastic ways and life would have to change completely involving higher costs, adaptations and might lead to poverty too. If the government invests well in this strategy , it will also have a good economic result in areas such as housing, disability pensions, investing in job coaching for the disabled, redundancy, investing in more hospital services for persons effected by disability.