

Information update

October 2019

Diabetes and driving

Road safety and Medical Review

VicRoads 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 VicRoads 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 to determine the outcome that is best for the safety of the individual and the community.

The purpose of this information update 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.

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.

Diabetes can have serious impacts on your vision. Regular eye examinations will help to monitor changes. Eye health practitioners can advise about minimising vision loss.

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 VicRoads.

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 VicRoads by email (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 allow up to two weeks for delivery.

Do I have to notify VicRoads 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 VicRoads. 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 VicRoads assess my fitness to drive?

VicRoads determines your fitness to drive on a case by case basis in accordance with national medical standards. Medical advice and assessment outcomes are also considered.

To retain your driver licence you must provide a medical report to VicRoads.

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.

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 name	Second given name								
Residential address	State	Postcode							

Licence type (please tick a box)

- Applying for learner permit or licence
- Current learner permit
- 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
 Fax: (03) 9854 2307
 Mail: Medical Review
 PO Box 2504, Kew, Victoria 3101

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

If VicRoads varies, suspends or cancels your licence you can appeal against the decision. However, you cannot appeal if VicRoads requests you to provide a medical or other report, or asks you to undertake a driving test.

There are two ways you can appeal:

- 1 You can write to VicRoads and ask for an internal review.
- 2 You can appeal to the Magistrates' Court.

For further information or to obtain medical or eyesight report forms contact:

VicRoads Medical Review

Email medicalreview@roads.vic.gov.au
Fax (03) 9854 2307
Mail Medical Review
 PO Box 2504, Kew, Victoria 3101

Information on driving and diabetes is available on the Diabetes Australia-Vic website at: diabetesvic.org.au

For advice on how to remain a safe driver, contact a diabetes educator. Call Diabetes Australia-Vic on 1300 136 588 for contacts in your area.

For more information about diabetes contact:

Head Office Diabetes Victoria

570 Elizabeth Street,
Melbourne 3000

Tel (03) 9667 1777
Fax (03) 9667 1778
Email mail@diabetesvic.org.au
Web diabetesvic.org.au
Diabetes Infoline 1300 136 588

The National Diabetes Services Scheme can be accessed at: ndss.com.au

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