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A Basingstoke reverend who has Type 2 diabetes is one of the faces for the new '100 things I wish I'd known about diabetes' campaign, which sees people living with the condition sharing their advice with others who have been affected by diabetes.

The free book, published by Diabetes UK, is full of everyday tips offered by people living with diabetes for other people living with diabetes.

Mark Christian (57) was diagnosed in 2008 with Type 2 diabetes as a result of a routine checkup. He was in the army and about to be deployed to Iraq and a blood test revealed high blood sugar.

He manages his condition with tablets and daily injections by adopting a low carbohydrate diet.

Mark will be seen in TV and print adverts for the campaign, which is also being promoted through on TV, online and in print ads.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uVCwz2DcGsA

With new figures released today by the charity showing that 700 people a day are diagnosed with diabetes in the UK - that's one person every two minutes[1] - the charity says that people often say their diabetes diagnosis leaves them isolated and with unanswered questions. To help people get a better understanding of their diabetes, the charity has enlisted the support of people with diabetes to share great tips and handy hints across every aspect of life with the condition, from going on holiday and eating out, working out and managing diabetes alongside work, relationships and more.

Mark said: “The treatment of diabetes, in my view, is most effective when it is an open collaboration between medical professionals and the person with diabetes. This requires the person with diabetes to take responsibility by being fully informed about the condition and their own personal manifestation of it. This book of 100 tips by diabetics, for diabetics significantly helps. I think I am pretty well informed and was shocked to find that I do not know it all!!

“I have a very good friend with diabetes who provides the personal support I need - the rest comes from my diabetic nurse and wandering around the internet.

“The tip about an extra bag on flights was a revelation to me and will make my life significantly less stressful! Every time I fly I am convinced that my hold luggage will get lost with my medication. As well as that, I will now have significantly more space in my suitcase.”

Jill Steaton, Diabetes UK South East Regional Head, said: “We are really grateful to Mark for starring in our '100 things I wish I'd known about diabetes' campaign. With it being focused on people with diabetes sharing advice with others who are living with the condition we were delighted to have the support of someone who lives with the condition day in and day out for our campaign.

“Every two minutes someone is diagnosed with diabetes and people often tell us they are left in despair and feel like they have no-one to turn to. But that doesn't need to be the case. People with diabetes are the real experts in living with the condition and this is why we have published this book, bringing together pieces of advice from people with the condition across every part of life with diabetes. Having this book is like having a best friend in the room who knows exactly what you are going through and who can offer tried and tested advice. Whether you have Type 1 or Type 2 diabetes, if you've just been diagnosed or you've had diabetes for many years, this book offers invaluable support and insight.”

All 100 tips in the book were submitted by people with diabetes, reviewed by the charity's clinical team and shortlisted by a panel of people with diabetes.

The book also contains tips from Diabetes UK celebrity supporters including actor Jonny Labey, rugby player Chris Pennell and Sky News's Stephen Dixon, all of whom have Type 1 diabetes.

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TV presenter Philip Schofield, whose mother and brother both have Type 1 diabetes, and The Hairy Bikers' Si King, whose wife and son both have the condition, also contributed to the book.

Actor Jonny Labey, who has Type 1 diabetes, said: “No-one should feel alone with their diabetes. Managing diabetes can be a challenge but it doesn't have to stop anyone from achieving their goals. The great thing about this book is it shows how we can all support each other and this is not something we have to face all by ourselves. That's why I'm so glad to have contributed to the book. I'd advise anyone with diabetes – whatever type they have – to get hold of a copy now.”

To order a free copy of the book, call Diabetes UK on 0800 035 5626 or visit http://www.diabetes.org.uk/100things

– ENDS –

For further media information please contact **Sylvia Lambe** on **01372 731 365** or the Diabetes UK Media Relations Team on **020 7424 1165** or email pressteam@diabetes.org.uk

For urgent out of hours media enquiries only please call **07711 176028**. ISDN facilities available.

Notes to editor:

Celebrity tips referenced in press release:

Jonny Labey has played Paul Coker in EastEnders since April 2015, and has also appeared in the West End musicals In the Heights and White Christmas and the award-winning film 'Soft Lad'. As well as supporting Diabetes UK, Jonny is also an ambassador for Diabetes Jersey.

“Just because I go hypo from time to time doesn't mean I'm a 'bad diabetic'. It just means I've miscalculated my insulin or that my body's going through a change. There are so many factors that can affect your blood sugar that you should never take it personally.”

Philip Schofield presents This Morning on ITV and has also presented ITV's coverage of the Royal wedding of The Duke and Duchess of Cambridge, Dancing On Ice and The Cube.

“If you're going out for dinner with family or friends with diabetes, it's helpful to pick a restaurant where they can have a quick look at the menu online first. And try to pick somewhere that gives you all the options – if they're trying to go easy on the carbs, don't plump for a restaurant that only serves pizza!”

Chris Pennell plays rugby for Worcester Warriors and England.

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“When exercising, test before, during (if possible) and after. See how exercise affects your levels to help you adjust your control for next time. Bear in mind when you have last eaten and injected as this will impact how quickly your blood glucose can change. Choose snacks such as dried apricots to help maintain your blood glucose levels during exercise and keep plenty of fluids close by. Some types of exercise will lower your blood glucose, some will actually raise it. That is why testing is so important!”

Si King is one half of The Hairy Bikers, whose cookery and travel shows appear on BBC2.

“If you enjoy baking, but want to cut back on the amount of sugar you're using, try using fresh or dried fruit, like bananas or raisins, to add extra sweetness without the added sugar.”

- **1**Diabetes UK is the leading UK charity that cares for, connects with and campaigns on behalf of all people affected by and at risk of diabetes. For more information on all aspects of diabetes and access to Diabetes UK activities and services, visit www.diabetes.org.uk
- **2**In the UK, there are 4 million people who have diabetes of which 549,000 people have Type 2 diabetes but don't know they have it because they haven't been diagnosed. 11.9 million people are at increased risk of developing Type 2 diabetes and if current trends continue, an estimated 5 million people will have diabetes by 2025.
- **3**Diabetes is a condition where there is too much glucose in the blood because the body cannot use it properly. If not managed well, both Type 1 and Type 2 diabetes can lead to devastating complications. Diabetes is the leading cause of preventable sight loss in people of working age in the UK and is a major cause of lower limb amputation, kidney failure and stroke.
- **4**People with **Type 1 diabetes** cannot produce insulin. About 10 per cent of people with diabetes have Type 1. No one knows exactly what causes it, but it's not to do with being overweight and it

isn't currently preventable. It usually affects children or young adults, starting suddenly and getting worse quickly. Type 1 diabetes is treated by daily insulin doses - taken either by injections or via an insulin pump. It is also recommended to follow a healthy diet and take regular physical activity

- **5**People with **Type 2 diabetes** don't produce enough insulin or the insulin they produce doesn't work properly (known as insulin resistance). 85 to 90 per cent of people with diabetes have Type 2. They might get Type 2 diabetes because of their family history, age and ethnic background puts them at increased risk. They are also more likely to get Type 2 diabetes if they are overweight. It starts gradually, usually later in life, and it can be years before they realise they have it. Type 2 diabetes is treated with a healthy diet and increased physical activity. In addition, tablets and/or insulin can be required.

For more information on reporting on diabetes, download our journalists' guide:
http://www.diabetes.org.uk/Global/Homepage/News/Journalists_Guidance_Update_2015.pdf

[1] Figure based on newly diagnosed figures from the 2011/12 and 2012/13 National Diabetes Audit (Health and Social Care Information Centre), extrapolated up to the whole population with diabetes indicated by the Quality and Outcomes Framework data for the equivalent years and divided by two to give an annual average

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