



Making Everything Easier!™

3rd Edition

Diabetes **FOR** **DUMMIES®**

Learn to:

- Recognise pre-diabetes and prevent progression to diabetes
- Understand and manage diabetes on a daily basis
- Prevent long-term health complications
- Choose a diet plan that works for you

Dr Alan L Rubin, MD

Diabetes specialist

Dr Sarah Jarvis, GP

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Dogs
Cats

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**by Dr Sarah Jarvis, GP and Alan
L Rubin, MD**



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About the Authors

Dr Sarah Jarvis has been a GP in London, England for 20 years and a GP trainer for 15. She has also been involved in medical writing and broadcasting for many years. She is the doctor to *The One Show* on BBC1 and the Radio 2 doctor, as well as writing regular columns for *Good Housekeeping* and *My Weekly* magazines. She has also been the ITN lunchtime news doctor and takes part regularly in interviews on GMTV, BBC 1, Sky

News, BBC Radio 4 and BBC Radio 5 live. She has authored and edited several books for patients including *Pregnancy For Dummies*, *Children's Health For Dummies*, *Women's Health for Life* and *The Welcome Visitor*, a book on the ethics of dying, co-authored with the broadcaster John Humphrys. Sarah has a particular interest in diabetes and cardiovascular disease and chairs the Health Care Committee of HEART UK, the cholesterol charity.

Alan L Rubin, MD, is one of the foremost experts on diabetes in the US. He is a professional member of the American Diabetes Association and the Endocrine Society and has been in private practice specialising in diabetes and thyroid disease for 30 years. Dr Rubin has been on numerous radio and television programmes, and has spoken to medical audiences and non-medical audiences around the world. He was Assistant Clinical Professor of Medicine at University of California Medical Center in San Francisco for 20 years.

Dedication

This book is dedicated to my mother. She was my role model, and her kindness, boundless energy and enthusiasm were an inspiration to all who knew her.

– Sarah Jarvis

Author's Acknowledgements

Life is a constant learning experience, and I would like to thank all my consultant colleagues, especially Professor Tony Barnett,

for their wise counsel. Most of all, though, my thanks must go to my wonderful children, Seth and Matilda, who accept with such good grace that they must share their mother with her working demands!

A third edition also gives me the opportunity to thank the thousands of people who have themselves thanked me for *Diabetes For Dummies*. You know who you are. You have given me a sense of enormous gratification for writing this book, having shared your stories with me and permitting me to laugh and cry with you. One of the best stories is the following from Andrea in Canada:

‘My three-year-old daughter was recently diagnosed with diabetes type one. It has been a rough time. To help us out, my brother and his wife bought us your book, *Diabetes For Dummies*. One day my daughter saw this bright yellow book and asked what I was reading. I told her the book was called *Diabetes For Dummies*. As soon as the words came out of my mouth, I regretted them. I didn’t want her to think that dummies got diabetes so I quickly added, “I am the dummy.” Without missing a beat, she then asked, “Am I the diabetes?”’

‘The story doesn’t just end there. The other day she was relaxing on the couch. She looked at me and said, “I don’t want to have diabetes any more.” Feeling terrible I responded, “I know sweetie; I don’t want you to have it any more either.” I then explained that she would have diabetes for the rest of her life. With a very concerned look she then asked, “Will you be the dummy for the rest of your life?”’

As sad as it is, I guess you’re right. We must look for humour in everything, otherwise we break down.

– Sarah Jarvis

Publisher's Acknowledgements

We're proud of this book; please send us your comments through our Dummies online registration form located at www.dummies.com/register/.

Some of the people who helped bring this book to market include the following:

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Introduction

What's funny about diabetes? It's a disease, isn't it? Yes, it's a disease, but the people who have it at the start of the 21st century are the most fortunate group of diabetes sufferers in history.

You may know the story of the doctor who called his patient to give him the results of his blood tests. 'I have bad news and worse news,' said the doctor.

'Gosh,' said the patient. 'What's the bad news?'

'Your blood tests indicate that you have only 24 hours to live,' said the doctor.

'What could be worse than that?' said the patient.

'I've been trying to reach you since yesterday,' said the doctor.

Those of you with diabetes have a decade or more in which to avoid the long-term complications of the disease. In a sense, a diagnosis of diabetes is both good news and bad news. It's bad news because you have a disease that you'd happily do without. It's good news if you use the news to make some changes in your lifestyle that can not only prevent or minimise complications, but also help you to live a longer and higher-quality life.

As for laughing about diabetes, at times you probably feel like doing anything but laughing. Nevertheless, scientific studies are clear about the benefits of a positive attitude. In very few words: he who laughs, lasts. Another point is that people learn more and retain more when humour is part of the process.

If you've experienced something funny during the course of your diabetes care, we hope you share it with others. Our goal isn't to trivialise human suffering by being comic about it, but to lighten the burden of a chronic disease by showing that it's not all gloom and doom.

About This Book

The book isn't meant to be read from cover to cover, although if you know nothing about diabetes, that may be a good approach. This book is intended to serve as a source of information about the problems that arise over the years. You can find the latest facts about diabetes and the best sources for discovering any information that comes out after the publication of this edition.

So much has changed in the eight years since we wrote the first edition that not one but two further editions have been needed.

- ✓ New information and advice is available on screening for diabetes (see Chapter 2) and how to reduce your risk of heart disease (see Chapter 6).
- ✓ Attitudes in the NHS towards surgery for weight loss have changed (see Chapter 9).
- ✓ Medications have changed so fast that some drugs we discussed just three years ago as new advances in reducing blood sugar have become standard therapy, and other drugs for weight loss and inhaled insulin have been taken off the market (see Chapter 11).
- ✓ The development of drugs has given rise to new interest in how diabetes develops and progresses and the concept of pre-diabetes (see Chapter 3).

- ✓ New research on the benefits and risks of very tight blood sugar control and low blood sugar have made doctors rethink targets for long-term control (see Chapters 5 and 8) and given drivers pause for thought (see Chapter 16).

In fact, you can find something new in just about every chapter, especially, obviously, Chapter 17, ‘What’s New in Diabetes Care’.

Conventions Used in This Book

Diabetes, as you may already know, is all about sugar. But sugars come in many types. So doctors avoid using the words *sugar* and *glucose* interchangeably. In this book (unless we slip up), we use the word glucose rather than sugar. (You may as well get used to it, sweetie.)

What You Don’t Have to Read

Throughout the book, you find shaded areas, which we call sidebars. These sidebars contain material that’s interesting but not essential. We hereby give you permission to skip sidebars if the material inside them is of no particular interest to you. You can still understand everything else.

Foolish Assumptions