

NZSSD Media Release – 28 May 2025

Warning: Fake Videos Targeting People with Type 2 Diabetes

The New Zealand Society for the Study of Diabetes (NZSSD) is warning people with type 2 diabetes to be cautious about health advice on social media, especially videos that appear to be from New Zealand doctors.

Some of these videos are “deepfakes” — fake videos created with artificial intelligence (AI) to make it look like a real doctor is speaking, when they are not. The AI uses real video footage to create a copy of someone’s face and voice.

“Until recently, deepfakes mostly targeted celebrities. But now, some fake videos are pretending to be New Zealand doctors selling unproven and potentially unsafe treatments,” says NZSSD President Dr Jo McClintock.

Be careful with medical advice on social media:

- Do not stop or change your medication based on social media advice — even if it looks like it is from a New Zealand doctor in a photo or video.
- Deepfake videos often make big claims, such as a new “ground-breaking” treatment that “works for everyone.” These are not trustworthy. Check with your doctor or healthcare provider before buying a diabetes or weight loss treatment online.
- Type 2 diabetes is different for each person. Treatment should always be personalised, taking into account other health conditions and medications.

“There is no single cure for type 2 diabetes,” explains Dr McClintock. “Any changes to your treatment should only be made with advice from your healthcare team.”

Get reliable information from trusted sources:

- <https://www.healthify.nz>
- <https://www.diabetes.org.nz>

If you’re unsure about an ad you’ve seen online, check with the trusted sources above. If you are thinking about changing your medication, check with your doctor or diabetes nurse first. If you have paid for a product after seeing one of these ads, you can report it to the NZ Police by calling 105 or on line: <https://www.police.govt.nz/use-105/fraud-scam-cyber>

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About the New Zealand Society for the Study of Diabetes (NZSSD):

The NZSSD is an incorporated society that is open to those involved in the care of people with diabetes.

Its members include diabetes specialist physicians and paediatricians, nurse practitioners, diabetes specialist nurses, psychologists, pharmacists, obstetricians, podiatrists, dietitians, scientists, ophthalmologists, general practitioners, community health workers and researchers.

The NZSSD is the national advisory body and leading diabetes clinical network on clinical and scientific matters. The NZSSD's objectives are to promote the study of diabetes and the best, equitable, standards of care for diabetes in Aotearoa New Zealand.

<https://www.nzssd.org.nz/>