

Diabetes and Your Emotional Well Being

Having diabetes, like many other things in your life, is a source of stress. Learning how to manage your diabetes is key to your emotional well-being. Here are a few steps to help you feel good and live well with diabetes.

STEP 1 - IDENTIFY YOUR STRESS

Often, we're stressed about things that we don't notice. These stressors seem part of everyday life, but they can make your diabetes harder to control. To see if there's a connection between your blood glucose levels and stress, try this simple test.

Before you check your glucose levels, ask yourself, "How stressed am I?" Use the scale below to illustrate your stress level.



1. Write it down.

Keep track of your blood glucose and stress levels in different situations.

Think about what is making you stressed. For example:

- Are you thinking about family problems or money issues?
- Did you do anything differently today?
- Did you eat new foods?
- Did you change your exercise routine?
- Did you miss taking your medicine (if so, why)?
- Did you do anything today to reduce stress?
- Did you have a great time with your kids, friends, or family?
- Did you attend a program for weight loss, exercise, or nutrition?
- Did you attend a diabetes support group meeting?

2. - Try this for 2 weeks

When you look at the results, do you see a pattern? When is your blood glucose in your target range? When is it high?

3. - Share with your health care provider.

It will provide important information about how stress may be affecting your blood glucose levels. Your provider may also be able to help you find ways to manage stress so you can better manage your diabetes.

STEP 2 - BUILD YOUR SUPPORT SYSTEM

Whether it's your partner, brother, aunt or friend, having someone to talk to and feeling supported in your diabetes management can reduce your stress level. This network of family and friends is your support system. The people in your support system want you to succeed in managing your diabetes. They want to help.

If you don't have a support system, build one.

You might include:

- **Your family, friends, partner, and/or siblings.**
- **Your diabetes educator.** He or she may also know about local support groups or organizations that you could join for no or low cost.
- **Members of internet groups** such as the American Diabetes Association online communities (go to diabetes.org and click on Message Boards).
- **Your religious leader** at your place of worship

Once you build your support system, don't be afraid to use them. Get them involved!

Take them along — Invite members of your support system to your diabetes appointments or education classes so they can learn about diabetes with you. Attending these sessions can help them understand how diabetes affects you.

Get physical — Ask members of your support system to exercise with you. Just going for a 30-minute walk most days of the week can make a big difference in your diabetes control. This will also be a great opportunity to relax and catch up with friends.

Ask for help — Sometimes just having a little help can make all the difference in managing your stress. For example, ask family members to try healthier snack options with you. Snacking on carrots instead of chips is healthier for everyone in your home and you don't have to do it alone.

STEP 3 - WORK WITH YOUR HEALTH CARE PROVIDER

Let your health care provider or diabetes care team know if you are depressed, stressed, or worried about your diabetes care.

They can help reduce your stress by:

- Helping you improve your blood glucose control. You can work together to figure out how you can make healthier food choices, fit more physical activity into your day or adjust your medicines to work better.
- Connecting you to other health care professionals who can help you.
- Giving you information about support groups and other resources.

Don't be shy! Ask questions to get the information you need.