

The Emotional Side of Diabetes

Having type 2 diabetes can be scary and tough. But with good medical care and the right treatment plan, you can live a long and healthy life. Reaching your personal diabetes goals early in your treatment and learning how to manage diabetes can prevent many of the long-term complications associated with diabetes.

Your diabetes management journey involves being emotionally strong and taking charge of your physical and emotional health. It is never simple, but these tips can help you gain the strength and skills you need:

Don't do diabetes alone.

Support is crucial to success.

- Find a diabetes health care team that you trust. They can provide the information, guidance, and support you need to manage diabetes.
- Talk to your care team about things that are getting in the way of you following your treatment plan. Sometimes transportation or trouble paying for medications can be a challenge. Other times food or housing can be a problem. Your team can help you with these problems and can make referrals to community resources.
- Talk to friends and family about how they can help and support you.

Learn as much as you can about how to manage diabetes—knowledge is power.

- Get diabetes self-management education. After all, 99% of your diabetes care is in your hands.
- Communicate honestly with your health care providers on a regular basis.
- Ask questions and make sure you get answers you understand. After all, it is your health.

Defeat Denial

- Set goals for things like blood sugar (blood glucose) and stay informed of your health status.
- Use technology, like a continuous glucose monitor (CGM) to track your daily blood sugar levels. Keep in mind that the readings are just information to be used—they don't mean you have been good or bad.
- Know your results on tests like A1C, cholesterol, and blood pressure. And make sure you also know what these results mean for you.

Give up the Guilt

- You didn't give yourself diabetes. Being overweight and sedentary can contribute to development of type 2 diabetes, but only if you have the genes too.
- Don't beat yourself up if you eat more than you planned or couldn't exercise. You don't have to be perfect to keep blood sugar levels in your target range.
- Taking one, two, or even three medications to manage diabetes doesn't mean you failed. Your body may gradually stop making insulin and using it the way it should. The important thing is to take your medications as prescribed.

Overcome Depression and Distress

- Diabetes can make you feel down. Concerns like sticking to a schedule may make you feel overly stressed. If you feel down, talk with your health care team about what's bothering you and what to do about it.
- Look for warning signs of depression. This can include feeling hopeless about your life.
- Schedule fun with people you like in your life.
- Your health care professional can refer you for help if needed. Counseling can often help. Use ADA's mental health director to find a provider.

Adapted from *The Emotional Side of Diabetes*, by Dr. William Polonsky and Dr. Susan Guzman. More information can be obtained by downloading a free copy of this booklet at behavioraldiabetes.org.