

# Diabetes and Stress Management

Getting used to life with a chronic condition can be hard. You might find yourself feeling angry, sad, or even afraid. These feelings are normal. But excess stress or sadness can actually affect your blood sugar. Watch for signs of these feelings and know that you can get help.

## Talking with your healthcare team

Learning to control blood sugar can sometimes be frustrating. You may have questions or fears about how diabetes may change your life. Your healthcare team is there to help you and answer questions. They can show you how to follow your meal plan, be more active, and check your blood sugar. Don't be afraid to ask your healthcare team for help.

## Asking others for help

You don't have to deal with diabetes alone. Support from family, friends, or a diabetes support group can help you take better care of yourself. Ask others to:

- Listen to your feelings. This will help you work through fear or anger.
- Eat the same meals you eat. Your meal plan will be healthy for family and friends, too.
- Exercise with you. Exercise is good for everyone. It strengthens the heart and helps relieve stress.
- Go with you to visit your healthcare team. This will help your loved ones learn what you need to do.

## Taking time to relax

Learning to relax and doing things you enjoy may reduce stress. Staying active also helps. Try rewarding yourself when you have met one of your diabetes care goals.

## Ways to relax

- Sit or lie back in a chair. Take a slow, deep breath. Hold it for 3 counts. Then breathe out slowly through the mouth. Keep doing this until you feel relaxed.
- As you breathe deeply, tense and then relax the muscles in your body. Start with your feet and work up your body to your neck and face.
- Picture yourself in a peaceful place, such as the beach. Feel the warm sand. Hear the waves. Smell the ocean. Doing this will help you feel more relaxed.

## Activities that can help

Focus your mind on things you like. This may include:

- Enjoying a hobby

- Meditating
- Taking a walk
- Exercising
- Taking care of pets
- Keeping a journal
- Joining a social club or group
- Volunteering with a community organization
- Learning yoga
- Spending time with people you care about

### **Recognize depression**

Many people feel sad or down when they first hear that they have diabetes. But feeling helpless or hopeless is a symptom of depression. Depression is a serious problem, but it can be treated.

If you are having trouble sleeping or eating, or if you feel overwhelmed, contact your doctor.

Don't wait! Get the support you need to feel good about managing diabetes.