





Coping with Diabetes

Diabetes is something you will have for the rest of your life—and there are no vacations from it! It affects a lot of things in your life, so it is normal to have different kinds of feelings about it. Below are some thoughts and feelings that many people have about diabetes.

Feeling	Tips for Coping
<p>Why me? I did not ask for diabetes.</p> 	<p>Taking care of your diabetes is a lot of work. It is normal to feel like it is not fair, or to be frustrated, sad, or mad.</p> <p>Your feelings may change from day to day and over time. Be honest with yourself about how you feel, and find someone you can talk to about your feelings.</p>
<p>I feel fine, so I can't have diabetes.</p> 	<p>Since people may not feel any different or have any symptoms, it is hard for them to believe they need to manage it. They don't think diabetes is a serious problem.</p> <p>Getting used to the idea that you have a disease is different for each person. After a while, most people accept the diagnosis. They wish they did not have diabetes, but they learn how to live with it. (This makes it easier to take care of yourself).</p>
<p>I feel like it is my fault.</p> 	<p>People often think that diabetes is their fault. You did not do anything wrong. It is true that lifestyle changes can help manage your diabetes, but that does not mean you made it happen. Many people don't have a healthy lifestyle and they never get diabetes. Diabetes is genetic (it runs in families).</p> <p>Instead of thinking that you did something wrong, think about what you can do to make things better—eat healthy foods, be active, and take your medicine(s). You can stay healthy and take charge of your diabetes.</p>
<p>Living with diabetes is too hard.</p> 	<p>Living with diabetes can be hard. Many people feel sad. Some days are better than others. It can feel like diabetes is a lot to deal with.</p> <p>Learning to live with diabetes is not easy, but education and support from your family, friends, and diabetes care team can help you live a healthy and happy life. Most people say they take better care of themselves when they get support for managing their diabetes. Talk to your diabetes care team about how to get help.</p>

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Take time and congratulate yourself on everything you are doing for your health. Sometimes we need to remind ourselves how much we have been doing rather than just thinking about what we have to do.

Think about the things you are already doing for your health:

- Learn more about diabetes
- Going to the doctor
- Asking questions about diabetes and your health
- Taking medication
- Checking your blood glucose (also called blood sugar)
- Eating healthy
- Trying to get active by walking, dancing, etc.
- Talking to friends and family when you are upset
- Doing something you like to relax, such as watching a movie or meeting up with friends



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Learning how to take care of your diabetes will help you feel better every day.

Remember, the feelings you have about diabetes are normal. A lot of other people will have the same feelings. Feelings come and go and change over time, and people can have many different feelings at the same time. Knowing there will be ups and downs can be helpful.

Finding a way to deal with your feelings is important since they can affect your behavior (the way you act) and your blood glucose. When you are upset or feeling stressed, your body makes stress hormones that can make your blood glucose go up and make diabetes harder to manage. Stress can also make it harder to think about taking care of yourself—you may eat too much or not enough, you might not exercise, or you may forget to take your medication.

Feel Less Stress

Often we don't know why we feel stressed. Start by thinking about the reasons for your stress. Things that cause stress (stressors) may be a part of everyday life, but they can make it harder to manage your blood glucose.

Which of the following makes you feel stressed?

- Work
- Things at home
- Taking care of other people
- Money problems
- Having too many things to do
- Other things

Tips for Managing Stress

- ✓ **Keep track of what makes you feel stressed.** Write down what made you feel that way and how you handled those feelings. Use those notes to remember the things that made you feel better.
- ✓ **Stay away from activities or events that are stressful.** Say no when things get to be too much. If you have to do those things, wait until you feel ready to handle them.
- ✓ **Don't work too hard or do too many things.** Save some time for yourself every day.



Everyone deals with feelings in different ways. Finding what works for you is important.

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Take Time for Yourself.

Move your body. Doing things like walking, dancing, or stretches help you handle stress and feel better. Smile and laugh. Laughing also helps get rid of negative feelings. Do things you like, such as reading, crafts, or talking with friends. Try to relax, it can help you feel calmer. Taking slow, deep breaths can help you relax.

Get Support.

Join a support group for people with diabetes, or ask friends and family to help you when you feel sad or frustrated. Talking to someone can help.

Find professional help. Try talking with a counselor (such as a social worker or a psychologist) who works with people with diabetes. Your diabetes care team can help you find one.

Create your support system: Talk to other people and get support to help you manage diabetes. The people you talk to—family and friends—are your support system. If you don't have a support system, make one.

Who can be a part of your support system?

Your support system might include:

- Your family or a friend
- Your diabetes educator (who may also know about support groups you can join)
- Members of internet groups, such as the online communities of the American Diabetes Association® (go to diabetes.org/NewType2)
- Your religious leader at your place of worship

Work With Your Diabetes Care Team

Let your doctor or diabetes care team know if you are feeling sad, stressed, or worried about your diabetes. These health care professionals can:

- Show you how to choose healthier foods, fit exercise into your day, and create a treatment plan that works for you and your lifestyle.
- Give you the names of other health care professionals, such as counselors, who can help.
- Give you information about support groups and local resources.



Once you create your support system, use it. Ask for help from people you can talk to!