

I Have Diabetes – Now What?

Aussi disponible en français : *J'ai le diabète :
qu'arrive-t-il maintenant?* (FF85-2074)

I Have Diabetes – Now What?

Dealing with a diabetes diagnosis

Everyone feels differently when they find out they have diabetes. It is normal to feel a number of emotions.

Some common feelings are:

- › shock
- › denial or disbelief (refusing to believe it is true)
- › anger
- › guilt or self-blame
- › relief
- › sadness or a sense of loss

These feelings are likely to change over time. Learning more about diabetes can help you feel a greater sense of control and also understand how diabetes will be part of your life.

Some people even see the diagnosis of diabetes as a chance to make healthy lifestyle changes. Small changes can make a big difference.

Coping with change

Everyone deals with change in their own way. Some ideas for coping with change include:

- › seek out support, at home, and in your community
- › plan ahead
- › take things one step at a time, set realistic goals
- › don't be afraid to try new things
- › review your progress regularly
- › make your health a priority
- › manage stress
- › celebrate your successes

Stress

- Stress is a physical and emotional response to anything you find demanding.
- When you are stressed, your body releases sugar into your blood. If you are stressed for a long time, your energy will be used up and you will feel worn out and tired.
- Stressful situations can range from minor hassles (e.g., traffic jams, deadlines) to major events (e.g., divorce, job loss, death of a loved one). Stress can also come from positive events such as marriage or a job promotion.

- No matter what the source, stress is normal. You can't avoid stress, but you can change how you manage it.

Coping with stress

- Know the signs of stress, such as poor concentration, trouble sleeping, muscle tension, and overeating.
- Figure out what's causing your stress. Work, money, health, and relationships are usually big factors. Focus on how you can change these situations to lower stress at its source. Deciding what is really important, asking for help, and setting limits are great ways to start.
- Take care of your overall health. Eat healthy meals, rest, and stay active. Make sure to take time away from stressful situations.
- Tell your Diabetes Educators if stress is a problem – we can help!

What are your questions?

Please ask. We are here to help you.

Ways to relax

There is not one thing that works for everyone when it comes to relaxation. Try new things until you find what works for you.

Here are a few ideas:

Deep breathing

- Deep breathing is a quick way to relax that can be done anytime, anywhere.
- Breathe in slowly and deeply through your nose to the bottom of your lungs. Keep your chest still while your belly expands (gets bigger).
- After taking a full breath, pause for a moment and then breathe out slowly. As you breathe out, try to let the tension in your body go. Repeat as needed.

Progressive relaxation

- This is a great way to relax tense muscles.
- Sit in a comfortable, quiet place. Close your eyes.
- Make tight fists and hold for 5 seconds, then relax your hands and let go of any tension. Repeat 3 times.
- You can use progressive relaxation with all of your muscle groups: arms, shoulders, chest, stomach (belly), back, hips, thighs, calves, and feet.

Neck stretches

- Stretching can help you relax and get rid of stiffness.
- Sit up straight and breathe in.
- Breathe out as you let your chin drop toward your chest.
- Breathe in as you roll your right ear toward your right shoulder. Pause. Drop your chin to your chest again while breathing out. Repeat to the left.

Other ideas include:

- › yoga
- › tai chi
- › meditation
- › visualization (forming a mental picture of something positive)
- › walking

Depression

Depression is common in people with diabetes. It is normal to feel sad or down sometimes. These feelings usually make sense given what is going on in your life and don't last long.

Depression can happen if these feelings are severe (very bad), long-term, and get in the way of your ability to get through the day.

Below are some common symptoms of depression. The more symptoms you have, the more likely it is that you are depressed.

- ☐ Feeling sad or depressed most days
- ☐ Getting less pleasure from your job, sports, hobbies, or relationships
- ☐ Often feeling tired and without energy
- ☐ Sleeping too much or too little
- ☐ Gaining or losing weight without trying
- ☐ Feeling guilty or worthless, like everything is your fault
- ☐ Having trouble concentrating or making decisions
- ☐ Feeling either agitated (anxious) or like you can't move
- ☐ Having thoughts of suicide

If you have 3 or more of these symptoms, or you think you're depressed, it's important to see your family health care provider. They can help to diagnose depression and suggest treatment options, if needed.

Resources

Community Mental Health Services

- › Halifax: 902-454-1400
- › Bedford/Sackville: 902-865-3663
- › Cole Harbour: 902-434-3263
- › Dartmouth: 902-466-1830
- › West Hants: 902-792-2042

Mental Health Mobile Crisis Telephone Line:

- › 902-429-8167
- › 1-888-429-8167 (toll-free)

Looking for more health information?

Find this pamphlet and all our patient resources here: <http://library.nshealth.ca/PatientGuides>

Contact your local public library for books, videos, magazines, and other resources.

For more information, go to <http://library.novascotia.ca>

Connect with a registered nurse in Nova Scotia any time: call 811 or visit <https://811.novascotia.ca>

Learn about other programs and services in your community: call 211 or visit <http://ns.211.ca>

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If you have any questions, please ask your health care provider.

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The information in this pamphlet is to be updated every 3 years or as needed.