

your blood glucose. It is important that you try to develop ways to manage your stress so that you feel better and manage your blood glucose better.

Some Ways to Manage Stress

- Become aware of the things that cause you to feel stressed and try to avoid the situations that you can.
- Learn ways to relax. Use relaxation techniques like deep breathing and progressive muscle relaxation, guided imagery, yoga, massage or meditation.
- Join a support group.
- Spend time with people that you enjoy, that make you laugh and feel happy.
- Be physically active, go for a walk. Aerobic activity can reduce anxiety by 50%.
- Find a hobby that you enjoy. Perhaps look for others that enjoy the same hobby such as in a knitting club, reading group, or exercise class.
- Talk to a friend or family member.

Sometimes it helps just to have someone listen.

- Make a list of the things you need to do and work on them one at a time. Don't try to complete the whole list all at once. Pace yourself and take time to relax.

Depression

People who are coping with chronic illnesses such as diabetes sometimes feel stressed, anxious or sad. Sometimes you may have feelings which are even more than just feeling sad, you may have an illness called depression. It is common for people with diabetes to be faced with depression at some point in their lives. Depression can affect you both emotionally and physically. There are ways to effectively treat depression and help you to feel better. Speak with your health care provider and explore the treatment options that might be right for you.

Signs that may indicate you are depressed

- Feeling sad, empty, blue or depressed for longer than 2 weeks
- Losing the joy in things that used to make you happy
- Having difficulty with sleep, sleeping too much or not enough
- Change in your appetite, eating too much or too little
- Not having any energy
- Feeling irritable or restless
- Loss of interest in sex
- Wanting to be alone, avoiding others
- Having trouble paying attention or concentrating
- Thoughts of hurting yourself or wanting to die

Fact

For family and Friends

If you have a friend or family member with diabetes, here are ways that you can help. You can make a difference.

• Learn more about diabetes.

Diabetes can be difficult for the person living with it day to day. The more you know about living with diabetes, the more you can help. Perhaps you could attend a class or diabetes health fair together. Ask if your friend or loved one would like you to attend a medical visit with them.

• Understand how diabetes affects them.

Not everyone with diabetes is the same. Some people find it easier than others to take the steps necessary to help control their diabetes. Learn what things give them the most trouble and know where they have their greatest successes.

• **Be a good listener.** Listening will help you to understand how your friend or loved one feels. It may help to give you clues as to what some of their needs are. Sharing feelings and knowing there is someone willing to listen can help reduce stress and make it a little easier for your friend or family member to cope on a day-to-day basis.

• Offer help and don't nag.

None of us likes to hear over and over what we "should be doing". If you know what causes your friend or family member the most difficulty in managing their diabetes, try offering some practical help. If they have trouble sticking to a meal plan, suggest seeing a dietitian or attending a diabetes cooking class together. Offer to walk with them a couple of times a week if activity is an issue. Ask "What can I do to help you with that?" Understand that your friend or loved one may not always make the choices that you would make for them.

• **Be supportive.** Sometimes it's just nice to know that someone is there, just a call away. No one has to do it alone - whether you have diabetes or have a friend or family member with diabetes. Look for support groups in your area and attend together. It can be a helpful experience for you both.

Tips

