

Healthy Coping with Diabetes

Many emotions and worries come with having diabetes. Diabetes can be stressful, but good coping skills can help you rise above the anxiety and distress.

Mental and Emotional Impact of Diabetes

Managing your diabetes may:

- Make you feel frustrated and overwhelmed. You might then fall into unhealthy habits, such as eating the wrong foods or skipping doctor visits. This is called **diabetes burnout**.
- Cause stress. This is called **diabetes distress**.

Why is diabetes so stressful?

You may have concerns about how to manage your diabetes, such as:

- How will food and exercise affect my blood glucose?
- How do I check my blood glucose and take medicines correctly?
- How do I prevent problems?

If stress from your diabetes becomes more serious and long term, it can lead to depression.



Depression

There is a strong connection between diabetes and depression. Both conditions increase the risk for developing the other. Depression is a more chronic, severe condition than diabetes distress.

What are signs of depression?

- Not interested in normal activities
- Trouble sleeping or sleeping too much
- Not hungry or eating too much
- Not able to think clearly
- Feeling tired most of the time
- Feeling anxious or tense all the time
- Feeling alone
- Feeling sad or hopeless
- Thinking about or trying to hurt yourself

What should I do if I'm feeling depressed?

Talk to your doctor. They can help you develop a treatment plan. Treatment may include therapy and sometimes medicine. Therapy teaches you about healthy coping skills.

Healthy Coping with Diabetes

What are coping skills?

A coping skill, also known as a coping mechanism, is an action you can take to manage and relieve stress. There are healthy and unhealthy coping skills. Healthy coping skills improve your physical and emotional health. For example, you can:



Go for a walk



Write in a journal



Listen to music



Stretch or do yoga



Try breathing exercises



Meditate



Take a bath



Talk to a friend



Read a book



Join a support group



Join an online community

Healthy Coping Skills:

It's beneficial to both physical and mental health to try positive, healthy coping skills like the ones shown above. Think of any unhealthy coping skills you may have and try to replace them with healthy coping skills.

Unhealthy Coping Skills:

Many people may have unhealthy coping skills and not even realize it.

Common ones include: **overeating, smoking, drinking alcohol, avoiding people, and lashing out at others.** These are all harmful to your health and wellbeing.

Remember!

To manage your stress from diabetes:

- Form healthy habits. Try to exercise, eat healthier, and get adequate sleep.
- Find support. You're not alone! You can find an online community on the website of the *American Diabetes Association*, www.diabetes.org.
- Talk to your doctor if you have questions.
- Use diabetes resources and tools that can help with your stress.