

Problem Solving for Diabetes

Managing your diabetes requires a lot of responsibilities that involve daily monitoring and planning! You have to eat a healthy diet, exercise, check your blood glucose, and take your medicines. **Problem solving** is an important skill. It helps you deal with situations in life that can get in the way of good diabetes self-care.

What are the steps in **problem solving**?



1. Identify the Problem

See how change in your life (new work schedule, traveling, eating more restaurant food, being sick) affects your self-care. Plan ahead for possible changes in your life.

2. Find Solutions

Write down all of your ideas for solving the problem. Think of people who can help you. Use free tools and resources. Think of other times when you solved a similar problem. Make a plan.

3. Take Action

Carry out the steps of your plan. Learn from how it went. Did it succeed? If not, figure out why. Make changes and try again.

What are examples of good problem solving?

Problem: You are too busy to eat lunch at work, and do not eat until dinner.

- Solutions:**
- Tell your supervisor that you have diabetes. Explain that you need to take breaks to eat to control your blood glucose. Tell them you're at risk for low blood glucose if you're on medicine.
 - Bring a note from your doctor if your supervisor needs it.
 - Pack a healthy lunch the night before.

Problem: You to go to a party where dessert is served.

- Solutions:**
- Eat a lower carb meal (higher in non-starchy vegetables and protein) before the party.
 - Have a small serving of dessert at the party.
 - Go for a walk after the party to help lower your blood glucose.

Problem: You forget to take your medicines.

- Solutions:**
- Set reminders for times to take medicine.
 - Use phone apps to help remind you.
 - Put your medicine in a pillbox that has a section for each day of the week.
 - If you miss more than 1 dose or have any concerns, talk with your doctor or pharmacist.

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Where can I find help with problem solving?

Don't hesitate to ask for help. Your doctor can refer you to a **diabetes educator**. A certified diabetes educator can work with you to help recognize future barriers you may face and help you develop the skills to resolve them. You can also find helpful resources online, like The American Diabetes Association. Their website has information on:



Tips for healthy eating
and exercise



Online chat groups



Recipes



Assistance with
insurance questions

Helpful Websites for Diabetes:

- www.diabetes.org/resources
- www.diabeteseducator.org/living-with-diabetes
- www.cdc.gov/diabetes

You may also consider joining a **diabetes education program**. This can provide education and support for managing your diabetes, and provide tools and resources. You can learn more about these programs through the websites listed above. You could also ask at your next doctor's visit.



If you have a smartphone, there are a wide variety of **free apps** available that can assist you with diabetes management:

- Glucose Buddy (available in English and Spanish)
- Diabetes: M (available in English and Spanish)
- Bant (available in English and Spanish)
- Diabetic Recipes

Remember!

- **Problem solving** is a skill. It takes time to learn.
- It may take some trial and error, planning, and being creative.
- Let your health care team help you succeed.
- Use resources that can help.