

Stress and Diabetes



What is Stress?

Often when we hear the word stress we think of negative things. We feel stress when money is tight; we feel stress when we are having problems in our relationships with our family or friends. But we can also feel stressed from positive events. Things like moving, a new job, or pregnancy can also cause stress. When there is change, there is stress. Sometimes, worrying about something that might change can cause stress, even if the change doesn't happen. Some people are more affected by stress than others.



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What effects does stress have on people?

When we feel stress, our bodies have an emotional and physical response. Not all people respond the same way in stressful situations, but long-term stress is usually hard on a person's health. Long term stress can cause wear and tear on cardiovascular health, the immune system, the digestive system, as well as contribute to depression and more.

How does stress affect my diabetes?

Some of the ways stress can affect a person with diabetes are:

- Raises blood sugars quickly
- Changes to eating behavior, such as binge eating or loss of appetite
- Decreases a person's likelihood of making good decisions that can affect health
- Negative emotions

What are symptoms of stress?

- Muscle tension
- Teeth grinding
- Problems with sleep (too much/little)
- Changes in appetite (increase or loss)
- Moodiness
- Diarrhea or constipation
- Stomach pain
- Loss of interest in sex
- Headaches
- Heart beating fast

How can stress be managed?

You cannot remove all stress from your life, but you can change the way you manage stress. For some people, managing stress can be difficult. Stress management may take practice, something that you get better with over time.

Some ways people reduce their stress are:

Practice changing the way you respond to a situation.

If there is a situation that regularly causes you stress, think, how can I respond differently so that I won't be so affected?

For other situations, ask yourself:

- Is this something I'll care about in 5 years? Or,
- Is this situation something that I am able to control? If the answer is no, work to let it go.

Focus on what is going well

If the stress is being caused by a negative situation, take stock of everything in your life that is going well. Sometimes you cannot change a negative situation, but you can change a negative attitude.



Don't call yourself names

It is often easier for people to think about what they don't like about themselves, instead of what makes them unique and amazing! Don't beat yourself up for things that have gone wrong. The past is in the past – focus on moving forward, starting now!

What is one thing you can do in the next four hours to take care of yourself?

Exercise

Fact: Exercise reduces stress. There are studies to show that exercise can be as effective as medication at lowering stress.

Talk to someone

Find someone you can talk to about what is on your mind. It can be a family member, a friend, or a behavioral health aide, or your health care provider can recommend someone. Keeping stress inside can cause it to build up.

Practice relaxing

Many people are beginning to try different ways to relax. Meditation, breathing exercising, visualization and prayer are all ways some people relax. Whatever technique you use, it is important to do it regularly.

More Information

For more information or if you have questions, contact:

Diabetes Educator: _____

Phone: _____



Diabetes Program

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