

DIABETES EDUCATION PROGRAM

STRESS & DEPRESSION ASSOCIATED WITH DIABETES



COASTAL BEND HEALTH
EDUCATION CENTER
TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY

DEPRESSION

Most people who have diabetes do not suffer depression, but “studies show that people with diabetes have a greater risk of depression than people without diabetes (ADA).”

Depression can make you feel hopeless or like you’re losing control of your diabetes. You may feel like you have no energy to regularly test your blood sugar. Or, you may feel anxious and unable to maintain your healthy eating habits.

Signs of depression

If you exhibit three or more of the following symptoms, or you have exhibited less than three but have been feeling bad for two or more weeks, it’s time to ask for help.



You’re no longer interested in the things that used to make you happy (e.g. playing with kids/grandkids)



You feel like you don’t have any energy



Your sleep habits change. You sleep noticeably more or less than you used to



You feel anxious and cannot sit still



Your appetite changes



You feel like you “never do anything right”



You have trouble concentrating



You feel like you want to die or think of ways to harm yourself

Getting Help

There are a variety of ways to get help with depression. **Talk to your doctor first.** You can also share with your diabetes care team. **Recovery is an ongoing process, but you can feel better.**

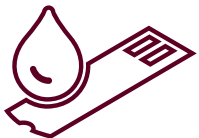
STRESS

Dealing with diabetes daily can increase your stress level. You may feel isolated from loved ones because of the extra effort you have to put into managing your diabetes.

Stress and Blood Sugar

“Excessive stress is a major barrier to effective glucose control and a danger to one’s general health.” (ADA)

Stress gets in the way of diabetes management by:



Quickly and substantially increasing blood glucose



Tempting you to eat compulsively



Making you feel strong negative emotions



Impairing your good judgment

Is this a Pattern?

If you think stress is affecting your blood glucose levels, try this:

- Before you check your blood sugar, think about your current stress level, rating from 1 to 10. One being the lowest level, 10 the highest. Write that number down
- Check your blood sugar and write that number down next to your stress number
- Over a few weeks of doing this, look back and see if a pattern emerges. Do your high stress levels look like they’re associated with high blood sugar levels?

Try to Relax

There are several simple exercises you can do to help lower your stress:

- Move around. This can be as simple as stretching your limbs
- Breathe. Sit or lie down. Take a deep breath and push out as much air as possible. Continue breathing in and out this way. Think about relaxing. Continue to do this for 5–20 minutes
- Progressive relaxation. Tense and then relax muscles in your body. Start at your toes and move up from there, tensing and relaxing one group of muscles at a time
- Think positively. When you find yourself thinking negatively (e.g. “My blood sugar is never going to be in my target range.”), replace the thought with something positive (e.g. “My blood sugar isn’t where I want it to be, but I’m getting really close!”)