How to Help a Loved One Cope with Diabetes

When people have the support of their family and friends, they are able to better manage their diabetes. It is a hard disease to handle alone. You can help your loved one cope with diabetes by showing your support. This tip sheet tells you how.

Learn about diabetes.

There is a lot to learn about how people can live well with diabetes. Use what you learn to help your loved one manage his or her diabetes.

- Ask your loved one to teach you about how he or she is managing diabetes.
- Join a support group—in person or online—about living with diabetes. Check with your hospital or area health clinic to find one.
- Read about diabetes online. Visit www.ndep.nih.gov.
- Ask your loved one's health care team how you can learn more about managing diabetes.

Ask your loved one about coping with diabetes and how you can help.

Here are sample questions:

- Do you ever feel down or overwhelmed about all you have to do to manage your diabetes?
- Have you set goals to manage your diabetes?
- What things seem to get in the way of reaching your goals?
- What can I do to help? (Example: Are there things I can do to make it easier for you to live with diabetes? If you want to be more active, will it help if we take walks together?)
- Have you talked to your health care team about your diabetes care and how you want to reach your goals?

Helping a loved one cope with diabetes begins with talking.

NDEP National Diabetes Education Program

A program of the National Institutes of Health and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

How you can help.

Try some of these tips to help your loved one.

- Find ways to help your loved one manage the stress of living with diabetes. Being a good listener is often the most important thing you can do to help.
- Ask your loved one if he or she would like reminders about doctor visits, when to check blood sugar, and when to take medicine.
- Help your loved one write a list of questions for the health care team.
- Eat well. Help your loved one make meals that include foods such as fruits, vegetables, and whole grains.
- Find things you can do together such as walking, dancing, or gardening. Being active is a great way to handle stress.

Walking together daily gives you time to talk and stay active.

Write down three things you can do to help your loved one cope with diabetes.

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

Cut back on sweets by serving fresh fruit for dessert.

Where to go for more help:

National Diabetes Education Program
1-800-860-8747
TTY: 1-866-569-1162
www.ndep.nih.gov

Diabetes HealthSense: An online library of resources for living well.
www.ndep.nih.gov/HealthSense

American Association of Diabetes Educators
1-800-338-3633
www.diabeteseducator.org

American Diabetes Association
1-800-DIABETES (1-800-342-2383)
www.diabetes.org

Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics
1-800-877-1600
www.eatright.org

National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases
1-800-860-8747
www.diabetes.niddk.nih.gov

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
1-800-CDC-INFO (1-800-232-4636)
www.cdc.gov/diabetes

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