

Positive Self Care Management

Even though you may have a chronic health problem, and in fact many people have more than one, you are still you. And you still have the same goals, desires, hobbies, and enjoyments as you did when you lived without the diagnosis.

But living with a chronic health condition can be a lot to deal with. Chronic means you will have your condition for the rest of your life; it is not going away and may over time get worse.

There are many examples of chronic health conditions but here are some common ones:

- Asthma
- COPD
- Diabetes
- Kidney Disease
- Alzheimer's
- Heart Disease including High Blood Pressure and High Cholesterol
- Heart Failure
- Arthritis
- And depression

If you have any one of these conditions you are living with a chronic disease. However, you are much more than your condition. Your goal is still the same – to live the life you want to live. And you can do that, with positive self-care management.

Becoming a positive self-manager is key to living with a chronic health condition both day to day and for the long-term. Knowing how to self-manage and working to develop these skills can help make coping with a health problem a little easier, both physically and emotionally.

Start by giving yourself a break. It will not help your condition to feel bad for yourself, blame yourself, or even deny that you have it. Allow yourself to accept that this is now part of your life and move on to managing it in a positive way so you can limit how it affects your life every day and for the long-term.

Learn all you can about your disease. As an active self-manager, you do not have to learn everything a doctor or researcher knows about your illness. But it is helpful to learn as much as possible so you can understand how it affects your body.

A great place to start learning about your condition is with your healthcare team.

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Members of your care team can help you learn how to cope with the day to day challenges you may have. They can give you: the skills you need to handle your condition: like managing your symptoms, reducing your pain, and taking medications, the skills you need to make healthy day to day decisions like which foods to choose and which to avoid, safe exercises to include in your routine, and how to reduce stress, and the skills you need to continue to live the life you enjoy, like maintaining your relationships, reaching out for support and your emotional well-being.

When you have learned enough to feel comfortable with the day to day management of your disease, your care team can continue to help you learn by teaching you to problem solve.

And your healthcare team can also help you learn to manage the long-term progression of your condition and help you with any concerns you may have for the future.

Your healthcare team is a great resource. But they only see you during appointments. You live with your condition all day, every day. Therefore you are the best manager of your condition. Work together with your healthcare team to get the skills and information you need in order to feel empowered to handle the challenges of living with a chronic disease.

Being a positive self-manager is something you will do for the rest of your life. You have a chronic, or long-term, health condition that is not going to go away. But it does get easier. With time and practice, new skills you are struggling with now will become routine.

And you can do it. You can manage your disease and still live the life you enjoy. Become a positive self-manager because you know your body and your life best. You are the best person for the job. Learn the skills you need to cope both physically and emotionally every day because you are more than your disease – you are you.