

# **Managing Your Diabetes: Healthy Coping**

### **Narrator**

Living with diabetes can drain you emotionally and physically. The challenges of managing your disease can sometimes feel overwhelming. That's why it's important to find healthy ways to cope with the stress.

### **Cecilia Sauter, Diabetes Educator, University of Michigan**

Coping with stress and diabetes related distress is important for anyone with diabetes. Excess stress can increase your blood sugar levels. Take care of yourself, stay active and find support in groups or activities that you enjoy.

### **Narrator**

Lance Miller and his wife Myra share a love of cooking: healthy cooking, now that Lance has been recently diagnosed with diabetes. Living with this chronic disease has helped Lance appreciate how important it is to have great support.

### **Lance Miller, Diabetes Patient**

My wife is the best support system you could ever think of. She decided that she was going to take this journey with me. We plan meals together. We shop together. And she's become the master of the diabetic recipe book. And if it wasn't for her, I don't think I would be doing as well as I am.

### **Narrator**

With a family history of diabetes, Lance thought he might be able to ward it off with 20 years of regular doctor visits and preventive medicine. Then a few months ago, he got the news.

### **Lance Miller, Diabetes Patient**

When I found out that I had diabetes, it was shocking, depressing. But soon thereafter I figured out that I really needed to find the opportunity in my difficulty.

### **Narrator**

So Lance "got moving." That meant more walks for the dog, taking the stairs rather than the elevator, packing healthy snacks for work, and, in general, learning everything he could about how to manage diabetes.

### **Lance Miller, Diabetes Patient**

One of the best ways I've found to cope with my disease is to educate myself about my disease. The more you know, the more power you have over it.

### **Narrator**

Finding ways to relieve stress, which can elevate your blood sugar levels, is also important. For Lance, one way to do that is through his favorite hobby: he's a huge film buff.

### **Lance Miller, Diabetes Patient**

For me, it's going to the movies. Not buying the big tub of popcorn anymore, but I am seeing more comedies and I find that it really helps to get my stress level down and keeps me a healthier person.

### **Narrator**

Some people handle stress by turning to harmful habits such as smoking, overeating, drinking alcohol or being less active. The good news is there are many healthy ways to cope with stress.

Some tips:

- Seek support: Build a healthy network of loved ones or friends that you can turn to when you need support or you are stressed. Consider a support group so you can meet other people with diabetes to discuss what challenges they have encountered and how they solved them.

- Stay active: Research shows when you are active, your brain releases compounds that make you feel better. Try to be active every day to feel better.
- Think positive: Think about and celebrate the successes, small or large, that you've had managing diabetes. Consider meditation, yoga or faith-based activities if that fits your lifestyle. Positive people and activities make it easier to get through the tough times.
- Be good to yourself: Do something that you enjoy every day. Maybe take up a hobby. If you do not meet a goal, try to figure out what got into the way and what need to change so you can achieve it.

Everyone has good days and bad days. However, if the stress gets into your way of enjoying life and feels overwhelming it could be a sign of depression.

Consider talking to your doctor or diabetes educator if you find yourself:

- Uninterested in activities
- Not wanting to talk to family or friends about your diabetes or other stresses
- Sleeping most of the day
- Seeing no point in taking care of yourself or
- Feeling as though diabetes is defeating you

**Jasmine Gonzalvo, Pharmacist, Diabetes Educator, Purdue University**

Remember that help is available. Your diabetes educator, your healthcare team, and your own support system are there for you and can help you cope. Take it step-by-step, one day at a time.

**Narrator**

Healthy Coping. One of 7 steps to a healthier you.