

The Challenge of Diabetes Self-Care

Having diabetes means it's important to keep your blood glucose in a healthy range to prevent or delay the long-term complications like heart disease, eye disease, kidney disease and amputation.

The good news is you can make changes in your life to do it. Setting goals and making changes in these areas can help you to live healthfully with diabetes.

These areas include: making healthy food choices, getting regular physical activity, taking medications if necessary, monitoring your blood glucose, and finding support in each of these areas.

“Making change is probably, you know, starting small with a small incremental change and then building in some small wins is a second important strategy, so that the goals aren't too high.”

But just following a management plan day after day can be a challenge.

Thinking you need to change everything you do, together with the fear of complications, can take its toll.

It can drive some people to just give up altogether. Or it can drive some people to try to follow their management plan perfectly. These two different extreme reactions can result in the same feelings: disappointment and frustration.

First, do not give up. Even the small changes you make can have a positive impact on your diabetes management.

And second, diabetes cannot be managed perfectly - because no one is perfect.

“It's hard but it can be done if we follow the doctor's orders, do what we're supposed to. It's not an easy task but it can be done.”

Even though you may not be perfect, and no one is expecting you to be, you can still be a successful Diabetes Manager.

As you focus on gaining control of the physical ups and downs of diabetes, you cannot ignore how you feel emotionally. Your emotions have a direct impact on your actions, which in turn, affect your ability to manage your diabetes each day.

For example, if you deny you have diabetes, you may not feel like you need to take your medication. If you don't take your medication, your blood glucose will go up.

Without change, this negative cycle will continue. You check your blood glucose and see that it is high. This can make you angry, frustrated and depressed.

These feelings lead you to eat a pint of ice cream to comfort yourself, which again leads to high blood glucose. And the cycle starts all over again.

Instead, you can break this cycle by finding ways to overcome your negative emotions. Positive emotions can lead to positive actions which will help you reach your self-management goals.