

Diabetes: Making and Using an Action Plan

There are lots of things you need to do when you have diabetes— things like remembering to test your blood sugar and watching your weight.

And some of them can be really challenging.

Knowing how to make a diabetes action plan can help you manage the things that may be hard to fit into your daily routine.

Everybody's plan will look different.

So remember that this is your plan.

That means you'll work with a diabetes educator or your doctor to come up with a plan that fits with the things that matter most to you.

The plan may consider how familiar you are with diabetes, how long you've had it, and how much support you'll need as you work toward your goals.

Depending on your goals, your action plan may include an eating plan, a plan to check and manage your blood sugar, or an exercise plan.

It may also include a guide to taking your medicines.

And it might include a plan for what to do if you get sick.

And it will include ways to help you have less stress.

Having an action plan can help you with hard decisions, help you solve problems, and help you better share ideas or concerns with your care team.

There are many ways you may use your action plan.

For example, you and your doctor may want to work on lowering your blood sugar by scheduling more activity.

But fitting activity into your day may be hard.

And doing it daily may feel like too much.

It may help if your action plan starts with small, easy-to-achieve goals.

Picking an activity you like will give you a better chance of sticking to it.

Walking is a good choice.

Even a walk indoors—like at a mall or a grocery store—can help.

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If you aren't able to walk, maybe you can pedal a bike.

Or your activity could be gardening or housework.

An example of a small, achievable goal could be: "Five days per week, I will walk for 10 minutes after lunch and dinner."

Even a little bit of activity can lower your blood sugar level.

And regularly taking small steps may be enough to hit your bigger goals.

Using a checklist and calendar to track your progress is part of a good action plan.

It's also a good idea to set a date to look back over your plan and see how it's going.

Then you can adjust your plan if you need to.

You may need to adjust your plan every year or if you're not meeting your treatment goals.

And you may need to adjust it if you just don't feel like doing it or if you have another health condition.

Big life changes—like moving, for example—may also be a reason to adjust your plan.

Making an action plan is a powerful way to cope with the challenges of managing diabetes.

And with other problems too.

A good plan can help you feel good about yourself—even if it takes time to get right.

It should also make the challenges of diabetes easier to tackle.

And you might even have fun doing it.