

# Dealing with Diabetes and Depression

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## Taking Charge of Your Diabetes Will Take Time



### “Listen” to your feelings.

Depression is common when dealing with diabetes. You have heard it a million times, “Diabetes care is up to you.” This is easy to say but hard to do. Staying on track 24 hours a day, seven days a week can tire anyone out. If you find you are in a slump, you might want to check to see if your feelings are getting in the way.

## Depression

Feeling down once in a while is normal. But some people feel a sadness that just will not go away. Life seems hopeless. Feeling this way most of the day for at least two weeks can be a sign of depression. Not everyone with diabetes is depressed. But studies show that people with diabetes are more likely to have depression, than people without diabetes.

The stress of living with diabetes can build. You may feel alone or unlike others. You may feel like you are losing control of your diabetes, if you are having trouble keeping your blood sugar levels where they need to be. You may feel tension between you and your doctor.

Depression can get you into a bad cycle. It can block good diabetes self-care. If you are depressed and have no energy, you may find such tasks as blood sugar testing too much to handle. If you feel so anxious that you cannot think straight, it will be hard to keep up with a good diet. You may not feel like eating at all. Of course, this will affect your blood sugar levels.

## What You Can Do

Seeing the depression is the first step. Getting help is the second. If you have been feeling really sad, blue, or down in the dumps, check for these common signs.



- **Loss of pleasure.** You no longer want to do the things you used to enjoy.
- **Change in sleep patterns.** You have trouble falling asleep. You wake often during the night. You want to sleep more than normal, even during the day.
- **Early to rise.** You wake up before you used to and cannot get back to sleep.



- **Change in feeling hungry.** You eat more or less than you used to. This results in a quick weight gain or weight loss.
- **Trouble focusing.** You cannot watch a TV program or read an article because other thoughts or feelings get in the way.
- **Loss of energy.** You feel tired all the time.
- **Nervousness.** You always feel so anxious you cannot sit still.
- **Guilt.** You feel you “never do anything right.” You worry that you are a burden to others.
- **Morning sadness.** You feel worse in the morning than you do the rest of the day.
- **Suicidal thoughts.** You feel you want to die or are thinking about ways to hurt yourself.



Do you have three or more of these signs? Do you have just one or two but have been feeling bad for two weeks or more? If your answer is "yes" to either question, it is time to get help.

## Getting Help

Do not keep these feelings to yourself. Talk them over with your doctor. There are many causes for depression. If you are on medication do not stop taking it without telling your doctor. Your doctor may ask you to see someone else. Many types of healthcare workers are trained to help in this area. There are two types of treatment. One is counseling (talking). The other is antidepressant medicine.

1. **Talking** with a well-trained therapist can help you look at the problems that bring on depression. It can also help you find ways to help the problem. You may see someone for a few weeks or for many months. You want to feel at ease with the therapist you choose.
2. **Medicine** may be prescribed that can help. Ask your doctor about side effects. Ask your doctor how long it will take to feel a change. Make sure you know how it might affect your blood sugar.

Many people do well with a medicine **and** counseling. Check with your health plan to see what services are covered.

If you have symptoms of depression, do not wait too long to get help. Your local American Diabetes Association may also be a good resource for counselors who have worked with people with diabetes.

### For more information

**Contact a Diabetes Educator** (nurses, dietitians, pharmacists, and other health professionals)

To find a diabetes teacher near you, call:

**The American Association of Diabetes Educators toll-free at 1-800-TEAMUP4 (1-800-832-6874)** or visit the website at [www.aadenet.org](http://www.aadenet.org) and click on "Find an Educator."

All Material on this handout is for information only. This does not replace your doctor's advice

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