

Stress and Your Diabetes

What happens to your body when you are stressed?

Your body gets ready for action. Stress hormones go into your blood. These hormones make your liver put out stored sugar and fat needed for extra energy. These changes happen to help you face stress or to run away. Your body cannot use the extra energy, without insulin. You may not have enough insulin or it may not work well when you have diabetes. This means that your blood sugar will rise with stress.

Your blood sugar will also go up if you get sick or hurt. Injury or illness is stress to the body. Many of us have other types of stress too. We have too many problems to deal with all at once. We have money problems or family problems. Your blood sugar may go up or down with this type of stress. Testing your blood sugar and rating your stress level will help you to know how your body reacts.

You can choose how you wish to deal with stress. You can handle it in a way that makes you feel in control. Or you can handle it in a way that makes you feel worse. Some people turn to ways that are harmful, such as drinking liquor, using lots of caffeine, smoking, or eating the wrong kinds of food. None of these will take the stress away. Doing these things can be bad for you.

Deal with stress in a safe way

Take deep breaths. Sit or lie down. Close your eyes. Breathe in slowly and deeply through your nose. Breathe out slowly through your mouth. Relax your muscles. Do this for at least 5 minutes.

Tense and let go of muscles in your body.

Lie down. Close your eyes. Think about one part of your body. Tense the muscle, hold, and then release that muscle. Go to the next part of your body. Start at your head and work your way down to your feet.

Loosen up and have fun. Do the "hokey-pokey." You can even do this alone. Picture



the circle being in front of you. " You put your right hand in. You put your right hand out. You put your right hand in and you shake it all about. You do the hokey-pokey and you turn yourself around, that is what it's all about!"



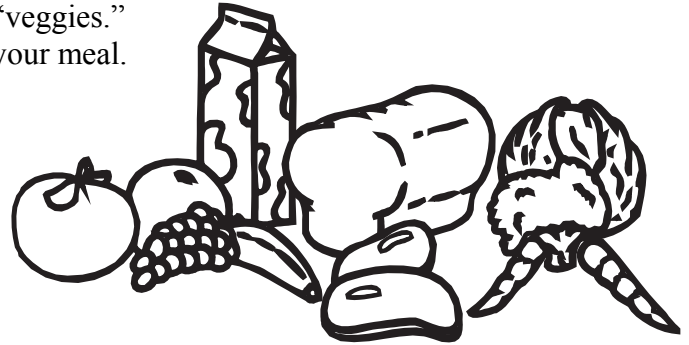
Be active. Go for a long walk. Dance in your living room. Jump rope. Do anything that makes you move. Do it often. Exercise is one of the best ways to deal with stress.

Talk to a friend. Sharing with someone else can be helpful. Try going to a diabetes support group. Reach out to others.

Say "NO." Many of us take on way too much. It is OK to say no. You may want to do something but if you are already stretched it causes stress. It is hard to help others when we are too tired ourselves.

Laugh. Try to laugh hard at least once a day. Seek out funny movies. Share funny comics or stories. Try to look at the funny side of life.

Eat healthy foods. You use up more B & C vitamins, protein, and calcium under stress. Eat more whole grains, nuts, seeds, and beans. Eat oranges, grapefruits, and dark green "veggies." Have lean chicken, fish or egg whites as part of your meal. Drink fat free milk or eat low-fat yogurt.



For more information

Contact a Diabetes Teacher (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 and click on "Find an Educator."