

## Living with Diabetes

The diagnosis of diabetes can be **overwhelming**, and may make you feel:

- Shocked, confused, frustrated, discouraged or anxious



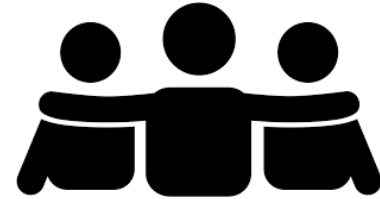
**Managing diabetes can be burdensome.** It can be hard at times to:

- Take multiple medications
- Check your blood sugars
- Pay for associated costs related to diabetes
- Make healthy dietary choice
- Keep physically active
- Control your blood sugars and prevent diabetes related complications

If it feels like your diabetes is controlling you, rather than the other way around, you may have what's known as **diabetes distress**. Fortunately there are things you can do to help **manage stress and cope with diabetes**, such as:



- 1. Talk with your health care providers** about your feelings
  - They may help to problem-solve your concerns
  - See your endocrinologist regularly
  - Talk to your diabetes educators



- 2. Talk with other people with diabetes**
  - They may understand what you're going through
  - Join support groups or try diabetes workshops in the community, or online



- 3. Talk with your family and friends**
  - Ask loved ones in assistance in managing diabetes, such as:
  - Remind you to take medications, to join you in being active and making and eating healthy meals



- 4. Pace yourself**, work on one goal at a time
  - For instance, if your goal is to walk 10,000 steps a day, why not try for 4,000 steps 3-4 times a week, and gradually work your way up



- 5. Take some time for "you time"** – take a break to do things you enjoy.

## The Mind & Body Connection

- Our **mental health** affects many aspects of life – how we think, feel, handle stress and make choices – all of which can **affect our physical health**
- Untreated mental health issues can make **managing diabetes difficult** and problems with diabetes can make mental health issues worse
- Fortunately, **working on one tends to improve the other**

### Depression

- Is a medical illness that is twice as common in people with diabetes than those without diabetes
- Depression can cause:
  - Feeling of sadness
  - Emptiness
  - Loss of interest in activities
  - Impact sleep and appetite
  - **Interfere with function** at work and home – **including managing your diabetes**

### Stress & Anxiety

- **Stress** comes in many forms
- It may be felt as **emotions** like anger or fear. It can also manifest **physically**, such as an increased heart rate
- **Anxiety** – excessive feelings of worry or fear – is how your mind and body react to stress
- People with diabetes are more likely to have anxiety than those without diabetes and managing a long-term condition like diabetes can be a major source of anxiety

### Getting Help

- Talk to your doctor if you think you may have signs of depression, or if the worries of anxiety are interfering with your daily life
- The earlier it is treated, the better for you and your diabetes



### Types of treatment

- **Medications** for anxiety and/or depression may be prescribed by your doctor
- **Counselling and therapy** – for discussing problems, finding solutions and learning coping skills
  - **Example coping techniques:** relaxation exercises such as **meditation, yoga and deep breathing exercises**

### Other Mental Health Resources

- **Wellness Together Canada (ca.portal.gs)** – offers free online resources and connections to trained volunteers mental health professionals 24/7
  - **Text “WELLNESS” to 741741** for confidential chat sessions
- Region specific services, such as the **Canadian Mental Health Association Halton Region Branch**
  - **Free walk-in counselling by phone 289-991-5396**
- Ask your certified diabetes educator for more resources near you