Avoiding Diabetes Burnout

Diabetes care requires daily attention; it doesn't go away.

The constant attention to blood sugar numbers, healthy eating, physical activity and medication can wear a person down. When that happens, it's easy to ignore some or all of your diabetes care routine. It is called '**Burnout**' and can happen to anyone with a chronic disease. With diabetes, burnout is when a person is simply tired of the endless attention diabetes care requires. It can seriously increase your risk of complications.

Recognizing the signs of diabetes burnout can help you avoid it or step outside of it more easily.

Here's how to avoid it, recognize it, and get back on track

Learn the signs

How can you tell you're dealing with burnout? Often times you can see patterns of change.

- *Seeing high blood sugars becomes "normal"
- *You stop caring about food choices.
- *You don't take your medication regularly
- *You only test "sometimes"

Keep a healthy perspective

Remember that having "good control" doesn't mean that your blood glucose numbers are always "perfect" or in your target range. **Don't become frustrated!** It is normal to have some highs and lows. Don't let a few numbers change your attitude. It is a great time to ask for help when you see that your numbers are not in your target range.

Identify triggers

You are more likely to feel diabetes burnout when the other areas of life need your attention. What in your life is causing you stress? Raising **children**, caring for your **parents**, **spouse** or other family who might also have **health issues**? And, we cannot forget **housing** and **money** issues?

Identifying the stressors can help you notice when things that change how you care for your diabetes. Could they be adding to any feelings of not caring, frustration, hopelessness, or anger about diabetes? You may not be able to stop the triggers, but being aware of them and how they affect your diabetes care is important.

Look for barriers

Look for the **things** in life **that make it hard** for you **to take** the best **care of** your **diabetes**. Talk to your diabetes educator or doctor and let them know. They will be able to help you problem solve.



Create "me time"

Can you avoid all stressors in life? Not really. But you can **learn to reduce diabetes-related stress**—and that can help you stay steady. **Taking some time to do enjoyable, healthy things**—reading, gardening, volunteering and exercise —can certainly help. Consider:

- Finding a kindred spirits or others who are also coping with diabetes (a support group, chat room or an online message board)
- Share your diabetes frustrations using social media
- Visit a diabetes message board site. It can be helpful to read other people's blogs, seeing how others have similar feelings and how they work through them.

It's common to feel burdened by the demands of diabetes care. Take the time to think about what motivates you to take care of yourself. What is it that is important to you; a loved one, children, grandchildren, not having complications, your faith? Whatever it is, write it down or make a list and post it where you will see it and can be reminded daily. Remember to see your doctor regularly and check in with your diabetes educator for any questions you may have.

Find some support

Don't keep your diabetes or your self-care a secret! Family, friends, coworkers, diabetes educator and doctor are all great choices to have or ask for support. They can help you make a plan and stay motivated to do your best to manage your diabetes. Let them know how they can best support you; meals, medications, routines, appointments, physical activity or testing. Also, consider letting them know what doesn't help.



Talk about it...Let others know... Reach out for support

If you can tell when you're in burnout mode, **it helps to talk** to your family, friends, co-workers or diabetes care team. If you can't tell, it often helps to ask them if they see changes in your behavior that you don't notice. Being able to identify that you are getting "burned out" and **ask**ing **for help**, encouragement or just an ear to listen, can make a difference.

Work with your team

Your diabetes care team is there to look beyond your blood glucose numbers and consider how you are feeling and coping, and help you find ways to get back on track. Just asking for help can make you feel better. It's important to note that burnout can also lead to depression, which also makes it difficult to take care of diabetes. Your health care provider can screen you for depression and can suggest treatment, if needed.

