

# MOTIVATIONAL TIPS FOR PATIENTS WITH TYPE 2 DIABETES

Living with type 2 diabetes can be frightening and frustrating at times. It is important to stay motivated to follow your treatment plan to control your blood sugar. Following your treatment plan will help reduce the risk for complications such as heart disease, foot problems, kidney or eye disease, and depression.

## PLAN FOR SUCCESS

Making a good action plan that fits easily into your life is the key to staying motivated.

- Set goals that are within your reach.
- Plan exactly what you want to do.
- As you become comfortable with your plan, try to do a little more over time.
- Ask your health care team to provide you with a meal planner, an exercise planner, a blood sugar log, and a medication schedule that will help you to:
  - Make healthy food choices
  - Eat the right portions
  - Watch your calories
  - Make sure you have some physical activity every day
  - Vary your physical activities to keep them interesting
  - Monitor your blood sugar level, and keep it from being too high or too low
- Take your medications as directed

## STAY ON TRACK

To stay motivated to eat right, keep active, and watch your blood sugar levels:

- Remember that success comes one step at a time.
- Focus on your successes—make reaching your goals a part of your life!
- Become a problem solver—if you are having trouble following the plan, think of what the problem might be and think of one step you could take to get back on track.
- Teach your family and friends about type 2 diabetes so they can help you reach your goals.
- Stay in touch with your health care team between appointments.
- Get support from your family, friends, co-workers, and health care team.

## BUILD A SUPPORT SYSTEM

Having people around you who care about you and want to help can make living with type 2 diabetes easier and help you stay motivated.

- Enlist the help of one or more people who:
  - Can help with daily tasks and chores so you have enough time to exercise
  - Are willing to exercise with you
  - Want to make meal planning and preparation fun for both of you
  - Will remind you to check your blood sugar
  - Will go to medical appointments with you
  - Can attend diabetes support groups with you
  - Are good listeners for emotional support
- Join a community-based support group for emotional and social support. Some groups are even geared to specific populations, including African Americans, Latinos, and Native Americans.
- Check with your employer to see if your company works with a local hospital or medical association to run a diabetes program for its employees.

## DEAL WITH EMOTIONAL ISSUES

When you have diabetes, it is not unusual to feel angry, sad, or depressed. You may also feel frustrated at times. It is normal to think it is unfair to have diabetes, or to feel like denying that you have diabetes at all. However, feeling down can be a sign of depression. Be sure to talk to your health care provider if you:

- Feel a sadness that will not go away
- Have no energy
- Have little or no interest in things

Sometimes, poor control of blood sugar can cause feelings that are similar to depression.

- Your health care provider can determine if your feelings are due to this or another physical cause.
- If you have depression, your health care provider can refer you to a mental health specialist who can help with counseling and/or medication.

## YOUR HEALTH CARE TEAM: A MOTIVATIONAL COACH

- Your health care team is there not only to monitor your weight and blood sugar levels—they can also reinforce what you are doing, tell you how you can improve your diabetes care, and help you plan and set goals.
- Be prepared for your health care team appointments
  - Bring a written list of questions to ask.
  - Be sure to tell the doctor or other provider about any problems you are having physically or emotionally.
- Your health care team can also assist with health insurance options for your individual situation; for example, if you are over age 65, a veteran, disabled, or unemployed.

## RESOURCES

### Websites

American Diabetes Association. <http://www.diabetes.org>

American Association of Diabetes Educators. <http://www.diabeteseducator.org>

National Diabetes Education Program. <http://www.ndep.nih.gov/diabetes/diabetes.htm>.

### Magazines

*Diabetes Forecast*

*Diabetes Self-Management*

*Diabetic Living*

### Books

*The New Family Cookbook for People with Diabetes* by the American Diabetes Association and the American Dietetic Association; 2007.

*The “I Hate to Exercise” Book for People With Diabetes* by Charlotte Hayes; 2006.

*The Ultimate Diabetes Meal Planner* by Jaynie Higgins; 2009.

*Diabetes Can Be Sweet...Once You Bury It* by Julie Wanner Rossetti; 2005.

*The Best Life Guide to Managing Diabetes and Pre-diabetes* by Bob Greene, MD; 2009.

*What to Expect When You Have Diabetes: 170 Tips for Living Well With Diabetes* by the American Diabetes Association Staff; 2008.

*Staying Well With Diabetes—A Guide for the Older Adult* by Medha Munshi, MD, of the Joslin Diabetes Center; 2006.

## REFERENCES

American Diabetes Association. Living with diabetes. <http://www.diabetes.org/living-with-diabetes>. Accessed September 1, 2010.

Joslin Diabetes Center. Diabetes information center. [http://www.joslin.org/diabetes\\_information.html](http://www.joslin.org/diabetes_information.html). Accessed September 1, 2010.