

7 WAYS TO BEAT THE DIABETES BLUES

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service — Galveston County Office



Up to 29% of people with diabetes also suffer from major depression. Those who have type 2 diabetes and use insulin have higher rates of depression than those with type 1 or with type 2 not using insulin. Women are almost twice as likely as men to succumb to major depression, which hits hardest between the ages of 30 and 59. If you become depressed, it can affect your ability to manage your own health. Here's what you can do to control your emotions before they control you.



1. Gather support. Talk to your family and friends about what it means to have diabetes so they understand your needs, concerns and frustrations. Describe what it feels like when your blood sugar goes out of range. Let them know exactly how they can help. Explain that you are not always able to control your blood sugar, even when you're doing everything right, so you may need some empathy. If you are changing your diet and making healthier food choices, you may want to ask them

to join you, and keep junk food out of the house. Try to find an exercise buddy.



2. Practice self-care. Taking steps to manage your blood sugar levels and generally taking good care of yourself is obviously essential for your own physical and mental health, but staying in control also helps strengthen your relationships, because it puts less pressure on your loved ones, who may worry about you or have to help take care of you. When you are consistent, and your blood sugar routinely stays within an acceptable range, diabetes can become just "one more thing" in your life; it doesn't have to be "the big thing" that takes over your life or anyone else's.



3. Set goals. When you are diagnosed with diabetes, you have to make changes in some of your daily habits in order to stay healthy. Change usually doesn't usually come easily or quickly because most of our habits are so ingrained in our day-to-day lives that our behavior is

automatic. Setting specific goals—how much weight you want to lose, how much exercise you want to do, learning more about nutrition and diabetes, improving your attitude and mood—and even writing them down, helps you stay focused on getting physically and mentally fit and also helps you monitor your progress.



4. Give equal time to your mental health. Think holistically



**JYMANN DAVIS
 M.S., CFCS**

**FAMILY & COMMUNITY
 HEALTH -
 EXTENSION AGENT**

TEXAS A&M AGRILIFE
 EXTENSION SERVICE-
 GALVESTON COUNTY

<http://galveston.agrilife.org/fcs/>

about your health; diabetes has both physical and mental health implications. Not only can diabetes contribute to feelings of depression, but depression has also been linked with worsening of diabetes symptoms. If you are depressed, it may be more difficult to adopt healthier new habits and stick to them. It helps to understand your emotional connection to food so you can address any underlying reasons you may have for overeating or making poor food choices.



5. Reduce stress. As if being diagnosed with diabetes isn't stressful enough, having to make huge changes in your daily habits and lifestyle is enough to overwhelm anyone. Chronic stress is a risk factor for developing depression and, although the exact reason is unclear, there also appears to be a direct link between psychological stress and type 2 diabetes. Relaxation techniques like yoga, meditation, tai chi, and deep breathing can help you cope with the day-to-day stress of managing your condition.



6. Seek professional help. Sometimes the support of family and friends just isn't enough. If that's the case, you may benefit

from psychological counseling. Cognitive behavioral therapy—a form of therapy that focuses on current issues and understanding the relationship between the way you think and feel and your behavior—may help you with the day to day management of your blood sugar as well as improve your mood. To find a good cognitive therapist, seek advice from loved ones or ask your favorite health care provider for a referral.



5. Keep a journal. Writing down your goals, and the actions you take to reach them, can help you clarify, manage and monitor all aspects of your disease. In addition to writing down your thoughts and feelings, as you would in any diary, it helps to record your glucose levels, injection sites, physical activity, everything you eat and drink, how you feel at different times of the day, information you get from your health care team, and any good tips or advice you collect along the way. Keep it all in one good-size journal so all your information is in one place.

DID YOU KNOW?
Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service-Galveston County offers diabetes educational classes.
For more information, call 281-309-5049

Sources:

1. Li C, Ford ES, Strine TW, Mokdad AH. Prevalence of Depression Among U.S. Adults with Diabetes. *Diabetes Care*. January 2008;31(1):105-107 <http://care.diabetesjournals.org/content/31/1/105.full.pdf+html>
2. Katon WJ, Lin EHB, Von Korff MV, et al. Collaborative care for patients with depression and chronic illnesses. *New England J Medicine*. December 10, 2010;363:2611-2620. [abstract] <http://www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/Nejmoa1003955#t=articleTop>
3. Pouwer F, Kupper N, Adriaanse MC. Does emotional stress cause type 2 diabetes mellitus? A review from the European Depression in Diabetes (EDID) Research Consortium. *Discovery Medicine*. 2010;9(45):112-118 [abstract] <http://europepmc.org/abstract/med/20193636>

