



Stress and Diabetes

What is stress?

Have you ever felt as though you had to be in too many places at one time, with too many deadlines to meet, things to do, and problems to resolve? When you have too many demands or *stressors*, your body will fight back, known as a stress response. The stress response can leave you feeling physically and mentally drained. If you have ever felt this way, you are not alone. *Stress is normal.*

Stress and Diabetes

Taking care of your diabetes can easily become overwhelming and be the cause of stress, especially if you lack the resources to cope with the disease. This may distract you from proper care or even affect blood glucose levels directly, either causing it to rise or drop.

Have you ever:

- had difficulty paying for your diabetes medication?
- felt misunderstood by others when it comes to your diabetes?
- chosen not to check your blood glucose because you feared it would be too high or low?

Any of these examples could be the cause of short-term and/or long-term stress. Short-term stress can cause short-term spikes or drops in blood glucose either through behavioral changes or a direct effect on the body. Long-term stress could be the cause of constantly high blood glucose levels. Fluctuating glucose levels could also negatively affect your mood and increase your stress levels.

Stress and Diabetes – continued

Stress Management

Having some tools to help manage your stress level can positively affect your blood glucose levels. Here are some ideas that may help you better manage your stress:

- Physical activity
 - Staying active is good for both mood and blood glucose levels. You may consider taking a walk, Tai Chi, or taking dance lessons.
- Engage in an enjoyable hobby
 - This could be something that you have done for a long time or something you have never tried. Having something you can focus your time and energy on could help to improve your mood.
- Talk to a friend, family member, or your healthcare team
 - Dealing with diabetes on your own can be hard. Talking to people you trust may help you to feel less alone. It is common for Asians to feel concerned about being a burden to their loved ones, but friends and family members often welcome the chance to help. Also, your healthcare team can give you tips on how to best manage living with diabetes, which can make you feel more confident about your treatment.
- Talk to a behavioral health/lifestyle specialist
 - The stress of living with diabetes can be overwhelming at times. Working with a behavioral health/lifestyle specialist may help you to gain acceptance of your diabetes and come up with ways to better cope.

Reference: www.diabetes.org