

Chill!



Simple Ways to Relax

Persons living with diabetes should know:

1. Stress is a threat to effective diabetes control.
2. Simple, easy ways to manage stress.

Recommended Conversation

Emphasize to persons with diabetes the threat that unmanaged stress poses to their effective management of blood sugar levels. Describe both direct and indirect harmful effects.

Direct harmful effects are caused by the body's extra production of glucose for use to respond to a stressor. Unfortunately for persons with diabetes the insulin available is unable to transport the glucose to the body's cells that need it. The glucose builds up in the blood stream causing high blood sugar.

Indirect harmful effects include a person's behaviors in response to stress. Many respond by drinking too much alcohol, overeating and smoking. All of which are especially bad for persons with diabetes.

Explain how stress management techniques don't have to be hard-to-do to be good. There are simple, easy techniques for managing stress. Things as simple as smiling, laughing, daydreaming and relaxation breathing are simple, excellent ways to relax, to lighten up. Another excellent means to chill is to express one's thoughts and feelings. Many people find that sharing their thoughts and feelings with another and/or recording them in a journal/diary is helpful. For double benefit, encourage the use of physical activity (e.g., walking and dancing) to manage stress. Not only are stress management benefits received, but other positive effects of physical activity are also gained.

Patients should be alerted that even simple behaviors are often hard to adopt. Old ways of responding to stress might be hard to break. Encourage patients to be patient with themselves and not to hesitate to ask their medical providers for assistance.

Resources

Web Information Sheet: *Stress* (American Diabetes Association).

www.diabetes.org/type-1-diabetes/stress.jsp

Brief information sheet on stress, how it affects diabetes and ways to relax.

Web Article: *Stress and Diabetes* (WebMD)

<http://diabetes.webmd.com/features/stress-diabetes>

Brief article that describes how stress harmfully affects person with diabetes, as well as methods for de-stressing.