

# Control your diabetes *For Life:*

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## Coping with Diabetes

**How well you cope with diabetes depends on how well you:**

- Understand diabetes and how it affects your body
- Understand how to control your blood glucose levels
- Communicate with your health care provider
- Understand the diabetes care plan developed with your health care provider
- Understand the emotional ups and downs that come with having diabetes
- Cope with stressful life events
- Use family and social support systems

### Meet the Challenge

Once you learn you have diabetes, many things in your life may change. Financial and emotional costs of diabetes self-care, medical treatment, physical disabilities, changes in lifestyle, or hospitalizations can be overwhelming at times. Being prepared for these changes can help you better meet the challenges of having diabetes. Learn all that you can about controlling diabetes, participate in your health care, keep a positive attitude, and you will meet the challenge!



### Learn All You Can

Take advantage of chances to learn all you can about diabetes, how it affects your body, and what you need to do each day to control your blood glucose levels. Knowledge is power! Changes in your lifestyle—eating habits, exercise, blood glucose monitoring, medications, and more—need not be difficult or drastic. Contact hospitals and clinics in your area for information about group diabetes classes, workshops, or health fairs. NMSU's Cooperative Extension Service is a good source of information about nutrition, meal planning, and healthy food preparation.

### Be a Part of the Team

You are not alone! Talk to your health care provider, dietitian, diabetes educator, and pharmacist whenever you have questions or concerns about diabetes, your medications, or your treatment plan. This team of health professionals is dedicated to helping you manage your diabetes. Be honest, ask questions, and participate in planning a diabetes treatment and self-care plan. Talking to your providers openly and taking an



College of Agriculture  
and Home Economics  
Cooperative Extension Service

*Raylene McCalman, MS, RD, LD, CDE*  
Extension Diabetes Coordinator

*Martha Archuleta, PhD, RD*  
Extension Food and Nutrition Specialist

active role in making decisions about your health will help you be successful in managing your diabetes.

### **Build Coping Skills**

Life can be challenging enough without the burden of a chronic disease like diabetes. How you handle the emotional ups and downs of living with diabetes and how you cope with stressful life events will be very personal. Learn strategies and skills to cope with daily challenges. Some people use prayer, exercise, meditation, or other forms of stress management. Take control of your daily life. Much of the stress in our lives comes from feeling overwhelmed by too many demands. Look for ways to reduce the demands on your time and make sure to take time each day for yourself. For help with learning how to deal with stress and diabetes, ask your health care provider about finding a mental health specialist who has experience working with people who have diabetes.

### **Family Support**

People who have a strong support system in place tend to be healthier and recover quicker from illnesses. Without help and understanding from family and friends, you may feel alone and isolated when dealing with the daily demands of having diabetes. Keep family members involved in your diabetes management. Remember that many things you need to do to stay healthy are the same things your family should be doing now to prevent diabetes in the future. Lifestyle changes are easier when the entire family joins in. Diabetes support groups and group classes provide a chance to discuss problems with other people who have diabetes. Since diabetes affects the whole family, invite your spouse and/or children to join you at classes and meetings. Health care providers or diabetes educators are available to answer specific questions you or your family may have.

## **Where to Go for More Information**

- Your health care provider
- American Diabetes Association:  
**1-800-DIABETES**
- National Diabetes Education Program:  
**1-800-438-5383** or visit the World Wide Web at **ndep.nih.gov** or **www.cdc.gov**
- Your county Extension office

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