

What a 14-year-old should know about diabetes

Stress and coping with diabetes

There is a lot more to taking care of your diabetes than checking your blood sugar and taking insulin. You have to figure out how to get diabetes to fit into your life. There will definitely be “highs and lows” ...and we are not talking about your blood sugar!

The way you deal with “emotional lows” is called COPING. There are many ways to cope with the upsets in your life....but unfortunately not all of them are good for you (like smoking, eating, avoiding people/places, and refusing to talk to others about your problems.)

So what are some good coping strategies?

- 1) Use your “support network”: ask your friends and family to help.
- 2) Get moving: If you are feeling sad, worried or stressed go for a walk or run or walk...or shut your bedroom door, crank up the music and dance! Exercise increases the chemicals in your brain that make you feel good.
- 3) Relax: read a good book, watch a good show on TV, or help someone out. Sometimes being helpful or focusing on someone else’s problems can make you feel better.
- 4) Positive thinking: YOU are in charge of how you think about things. Each time you think a negative or bad thought, purposely think of something that makes you happy or proud instead.

To tell or not to tell?

Do your friends know you have diabetes and what it means? If not, now is the right time to get them up to speed! Your friends are probably your best support system and can help you in lots of ways. The best way to get comfortable with this is to just do it! Sometimes it helps to practice first.

Make sure you bring your diabetes supplies, including short acting carbs (e.g. juice, gel) and emergency numbers when out with friends.

Feeling sad, mad or worried?

Managing diabetes along with other things can be overwhelming. Sometimes “lows” in your mood or worries can impact how you are doing at home and school. This can be a sign of DEPRESSION.

Here are some signs of possible depression:

- losing pleasure in things that used to be fun
- sleeping a lot (or having a hard time sleeping)

- feeling more tired than usual
- not being hungry (or eating a lot more than usual)
- feeling sad or mad most of the time, talk to your doctor or parents!
- If you think you might be depressed or anxious, tell an adult! There are many things you can do to feel better, including talking to a counselor and taking medication. You aren't alone.

Talking with your doctor about private things.

-Make sure you have time alone with your doctor, nurse or educator. This will give you the chance to practice speaking up and answering questions.

-Few things are more personal than your body and your health. Now that you are 14, you can privately talk to your doctor about things like sex, birth control, and drug /alcohol use. Your conversation will be kept confidential which means your doctor will not tell your parents/guardians what you discussed without your permission unless you or someone else was at risk of harm.

-If you are interested in learning more about your rights in Connecticut, you can visit this website:

http://www.ct.gov/dcf/lib/dcf/child_welfare_services/pdf/legal_rights_of_teens.pdf