



emotional
well being
with diabetes

streetwise




Feeling down

DO YOU FEEL DOWN OR STRESSED SOMETIMES, OR FIND YOURSELF WORRYING ABOUT THINGS THAT ARE HAPPENING IN YOUR LIFE?

This is pretty normal and can happen for lots of reasons, arguing with a friend, or a split with a boyfriend/girlfriend, or someone you love getting ill or dying. Even something like not doing too well on an exam can make it hard to feel okay and make people feel really worked up. When you feel this way you may believe that something bad will happen and might feel panicky, struggle to catch your breath or feel faint.

Feeling down and worrying can make you feel sad and tearful or behave in a different way than usual. It can affect how you eat - more than usual or perhaps less - it can keep you awake at night, or make you not want to get up to face the day.

As horrible as this is it is okay to feel down or worried some of the time - but if you are feeling like this often and these feelings are stopping you from getting on with your life the way you want it to be, it can help to talk to someone. Talk to your friends or parents or your GP or your diabetes specialist or local healthcare team about the way you are feeling. See if they have noticed sadness or worry getting in the way of your happiness. Ask them if they have ideas about how to get back on track. Some people find it can help to just get things off their chest. If this does not help then a counsellor or a psychologist could help you think about different ways to deal with sadness or worry, so you can get back to being in charge of your life.



Feeling down and worrying can make you feel sad and tearful or behave in a different way than usual.

Having to think about these things can make people feel stressed, cross, angry, fed up or miserable.

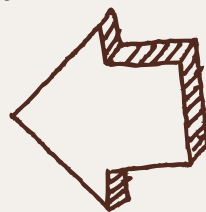
Having these feelings can make it even harder to do all the things you need to do because of your diabetes and you may decide not to bother with injections, blood tests or healthy eating. Not doing any of these things may result in you having too many high or low blood sugars. This means that your diabetes team and parents can also end up getting cross, angry, fed up or miserable. It is easy to get into a vicious cycle where the worse you feel about things the more out of control your diabetes gets which then makes you feel even worse.

Needles and finger pricks

How do you feel about doing blood tests? What about injections? Can you do the amount of tests your diabetes team and parents want you to do?

Do not suffer in silence. Sometimes worry about needles can be a sign of “fed-upness” with diabetes. Your diabetes nurse can talk with you about changing your injection techniques or trying some different devices to see if any of these make a difference. A psychologist can help you practise some relaxation techniques and try some strategies to make needles less of a worry.

A psychologist could also talk with you about ways to deal with “fed-upness.”



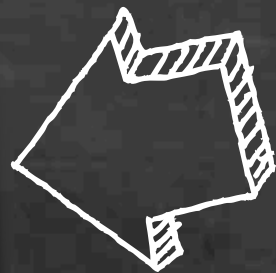


Body Image & Eating Disorders

Taking care of diabetes means having to think about **what** you eat and **when** you eat a lot more than your friends have to. Depending on the regimen you are on there may be some things that you are not supposed to eat. This can make it hard to have a good relationship with food. You also might notice that you get cravings for exactly the foods you ought to avoid. Instead of having just a little piece of chocolate you might eat a whole bar. You may end up having a hyper as well as feeling really guilty.

Sometimes eating a lot of food can make you feel better when you are feeling sad or worried or anxious. To begin with, this might make you feel better but afterwards you can feel even worse and you might be sick or not give yourself your insulin to try and even things out. After this, you might try really hard to eat much less than usual. This starving – bingeing rollercoaster can be pretty difficult to get off. It can make it really hard to keep your diabetes in its place. It is important to get off this rollercoaster as soon as you notice you have gotten on it!

Living with diabetes means having to pay attention to things that most of your friends do not need to think about. Your diabetes team will have told you about remembering to give yourself insulin (perhaps at times that can be inconvenient), remembering blood tests, watching what you eat and thinking about how to match what you eat with the amount of insulin you take.



Body Image & Eating Disorders



	agree	disagree
I try to avoid eating in front of people		
I try to skip meals, then eat a large quantity of food in secret		
I weigh myself frequently		
I have lost a lot of weight recently on purpose		
I wish I could be much thinner		
I hate my thighs/stomach/bottom		
I avoid giving myself insulin to prevent me from putting on weight		

If you have ticked agree to any of the above, it is a really good idea to talk with your diabetes specialist or local healthcare team about how to find someone to help you to sort things out.



You may feel worried about having to tell your parents or your diabetes team but it is really important you tell someone about these thoughts and behaviours.

The first thing to do is to stop thinking that some foods are good and other foods are bad. Your diabetes team will help you think about how to allow yourself treats and snacks that will fit into your diabetes regimen. Try to eat regularly. This will help your body work with your insulin and will stop you from getting really hungry. Your diabetes team can help you think about how to balance your meals and make sure you are eating the best kinds of food for you. You could think about changing your diabetes regimen to allow you to eat more of the things you would like to.

Stress

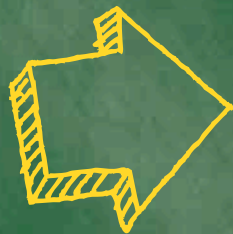
Feeling down or anxious is often a response to events that are going on around us. These events are called stressors and are usually things we cannot avoid. But we can learn to deal with them.



All of us live with stress on a day to day basis. Some stresses are things that we know about and might not seem like a big deal. Other stresses might be bigger events that you might or might not have control over.

Here is a list of things that can cause stress – can you add things to the list?

- Completing homework on time
- Taking tests in school
- Arguing with friends, brothers and sisters or parents
- Moving house
- Going on holiday
- Illness in family/friends
- Travelling on public transport
- Coming to clinic and having to discuss your diabetes with the team
- Doing blood tests or giving insulin when you are with your friends



My other stresses



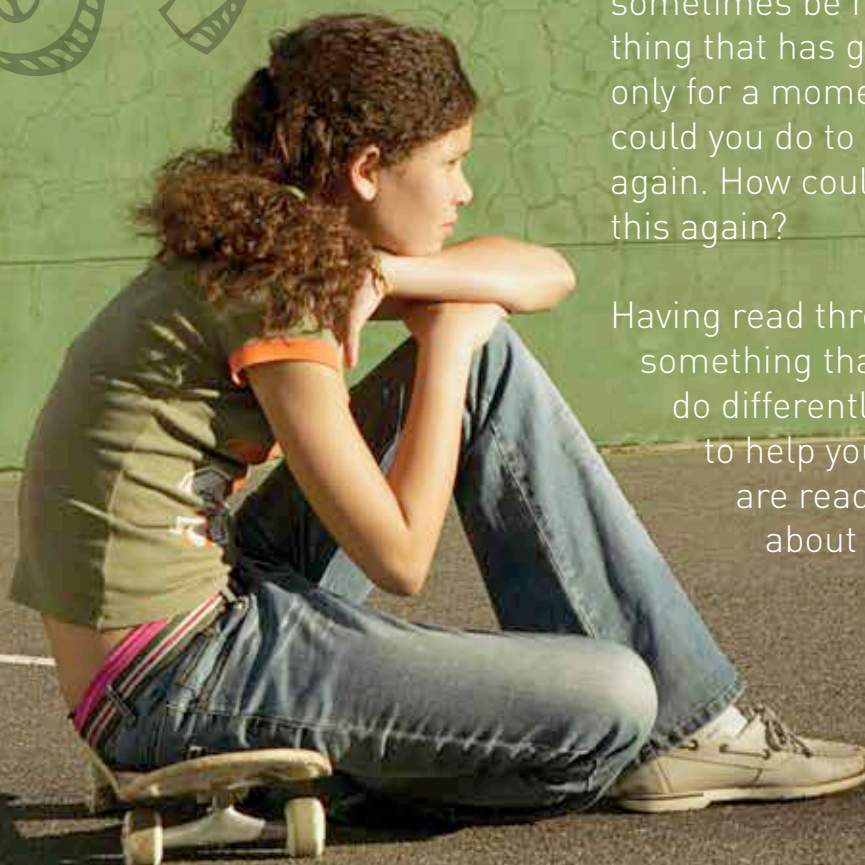


We know that all kinds of stress, good and bad, controllable and uncontrollable, can affect the body by producing adrenaline which can make you feel uptight, tense, and panicky. Stress can also make it hard to control blood sugars which can then cause more stress. It is that vicious cycle again!

Think about the events that cause you the most stress. Is it possible to avoid the event that is causing you to feel this way? For example if arguing with your parents is causing you stress you could try to not argue. But you will not be able to avoid the stress of completing homework. So how can we deal with the things we cannot avoid? Most of time we concentrate on things that are not working that confirm our "everything is rubbish" view.

Trying to focus on what is going well can sometimes be helpful. Try and think of one thing that has gone well today - even if it was only for a moment. How did this happen? What could you do to encourage this to happen again. How could you make sure you did this again?

Having read through this leaflet there might be something that you think you might want to do differently. The following is an exercise to help you think through whether you are ready and able to do something about your stressors.



LOOK AT THE CHART BELOW

Write down what it is that you are doing that might be a problem for you (or for other people) and might need changing.

In the first column write down as many things that you can think of that are good about this behaviour – try and think of all of the best things about doing this thing – what are the advantages to doing this thing?

In the second column write down all of the worst things – what are the disadvantages to how things are right now?

Take your time, it can sometimes help to think about how you would like things to be in the future while you are doing this.

How will it be if things stay as they are?

How will it be if you find ways to turn things round?

advantage

disadvantage

Stress

Now imagine a scale from 1 to 10 with 10 being that doing this thing is the most important thing in the world. How close to 10 are you?

Circle your answer here:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Now think about how confident you are that you could make these changes if you decided you wanted to. With 10 being totally confident think about how close to 10 you are.

Write down your answer here:

Now think about all of the other things that are going on in your life and rate how much of a priority this change is. 10 would be your top priority – how close to 10 are you?

Write down your answer here:

If all of your answers are close to 10 then you are pretty motivated to change. Try and find someone to help you make some goals and keep encouraging your commitment to do things differently.

If one or more of your answers are nearer to (or less than) 5 then it may be harder to start doing things differently. Talking to someone can help you think about changing and why it might be important.

WHAT DO YOU NEED TO THINK
ABOUT TO MAKE CHANGE POSSIBLE?

THINK WHAT MIGHT MAKE DOING
THINGS DIFFERENTLY MORE
IMPORTANT OR MORE OF A PRIORITY.

WHO COULD HELP YOU FEEL MORE
CONFIDENT ABOUT CHANGE?

YOU DO NOT HAVE TO BE MAD, BAD
OR SAD TO SEE A PSYCHOLOGIST.

THEY ARE THERE TO HELP YOU
FEEL RIGHT ABOUT THINGS AND
SUPPORT YOU LIVING WITH
DIABETES SUCCESSFULLY.

If you would like to change how you
feel about things, think about finding
someone to talk to, to help you get
the most out of your life.

feel
better

Contact Numbers

School Nurse:

Diabetes Specialist or Local Team:

Kidshealth

<http://www.kidshealth.org.nz>

Starship Transition

<https://www.starship.org.nz/patients-parents-and-visitors/youth-transition/diabetes-service>

Youth Law Aotearoa

<http://www.youthlaw.co.nz>

SPARX – online tool for youth

<https://sparx.org.nz>

SPARX is an online program to help teenagers (12–19 year olds) who are feeling down, stressed or who have depression. SPARX looks like a game and if you do one or two levels of SPARX a week and try out the skills in between you should start to feel better.

The Lowdown

<https://thelowdown.co.nz>

Helping young Kiwis understand and deal with depression. Free text 5626 for help.

A series of leaflets is available that may be helpful for you:

- Annual Review
- Body Piercing & Tattooing
- Emotional Well-being
- Exercise
- Insulin Pumps
- Looking After Type 1 Diabetes
- Sensible Drinking
- Sex and Beyond
- Top Tips for School
- Travelling

Ask your diabetes team for the ones you want.

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