

Changing Behavior

Taking care of yourself and managing your diabetes involves many behaviors or self-care activities. Some of the self-care activities are related to the way you eat, how active you are, how often you check your blood glucose, taking your medications and how often you go to the doctor. To better care for yourself and to manage your diabetes, you may need to change some of these behaviors. Just learning about diabetes will not cause you to make changes. You will need to have the knowledge, skills, resources, support and a positive attitude to make changes.

- What is change?**
- Change means replacing old ways of doing things with a new way.
 - You don't have to change; you can choose to change.
 - Change is an ongoing process, not an event.

When you decide to make a change, you agree to replace an old way of doing things with a new and more healthy way!

What is behavior?

- Behavior is the way you act, what you do.
- Behavior is a result of your thoughts and feelings.

Behavior Change

Stages of change: Where are you?

1. Not interested in making a change in behavior
2. Thinking about making a change in a behavior
3. Taking steps to make a change in a behavior
4. Making a change in behavior
5. Maintaining the change in a behavior
6. The change in behavior is now a habit, no longer a problem!

What gets in the way of making a change in behavior ?

- How you feel about yourself
- Not enough time
- Not seen as important
- Thinking of past failures
- Feelings of sadness or depression

- Lack of family support
- Lack of knowledge
- Cost

How to overcome roadblocks or barriers:

- First, identify things that get in the way of making changes.
- Next, identify solutions to overcoming barriers.
- Focus on being positive:
 - *I can....*
 - *I will....*
 - *I do....*
- Believe that you can make the change.

How to make a change in behavior:

- Make a list of areas related to diabetes management or overall health that you want to change or areas that you know, if changed, would bring better health. For example:
 - Food and meal planning
 - Exercise
 - Stress and coping
 - Medications
 - Blood glucose monitoring
 - Stopping smoking
- The decision is yours. Decide what you are willing to change.
- From the list above, pick **one area** you want to work on first. Don't try to make too many changes at one time. Too many changes can add stress.
- State the problem or concern.
- Set the goal. The goal should be:
 - Realistic
 - Reachable
- The goal statement should include the behavior you want to change, how often, and for how long: "For the next four weeks, I will walk one mile, five times per week."
- List ways you can meet the goal.

- Begin working on the behavior you want to change and are willing to change.
- Build in rewards to celebrate success.
 - Emotional reward: feeling good about yourself.
 - Social reward: getting positive feedback from family or friends, or going to a movie with a friend.
 - Physical reward: buying a new book to read; taking time for yourself.

Use the Behavior Change Plan on page 9 to develop your behavior change plans.

How to keep from going back to old habits:

- Plan ahead for times when you might be tempted to go back to old habits.
- Be prepared.
 - Do not buy foods you know you will overeat.
 - When others keep offering you food you do not want, say, “I know you want to support me in my efforts to lose weight, so I will say no thanks.”
 - Avoid excuses to return to old habits. For example, don’t use vacation as an excuse to not exercise.
- Avoid all-or-none behavior: “Because of work, I can’t exercise two days this week, so I won’t exercise at all.”
- Avoid use of “good” or “bad” blood glucose control. Instead, think “within my target blood glucose range” or “outside my target blood glucose range.”
- Think positive: “I have the knowledge and skills to make a choice, and I am willing to live with the results of my behavior.”

Examine your thoughts and feelings

List what gets in the way of taking care of your diabetes.

Identify your feelings about your self-care habits.

Make a two-column list of your self-talk. For example:

Negative thoughts

“A 240 blood glucose! I am doomed to be out of control with my diabetes.”

Positive thoughts

“ Okay, it is higher than I like, but I’ll take a nice, relaxing walk; I can improve it!”

Ask yourself: “What am I saying to myself right now? Is it true?”

“What are my goals? Are they realistic?”

Where can you get support?

- Family
- Friends
- Church, synagogue, mosque
- Co-workers
- Neighbors
- Support groups
- Health care team
- Internet

Behavior change example:

- Step 1: Identify the behavior you want to change and are willing to change; for example, checking blood glucose.
- Steps 2 and 3: Identify barriers with possible solutions.

Barriers to not checking blood glucose	Possible solutions
Don't know how	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attend class on monitoring • Ask questions • Seek help from the company that makes your meter
Don't know which meter to use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talk with my diabetes educator • Attend a class on monitoring
Cost	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact the human resource department at work to see if a meter would be covered by my health insurance plan • Call several pharmacies to find the best buy • Set a realistic goal for the number of times I can check within my budget • Check with my diabetes educator for coupons or rebates to save money

- Step 4: Set goals.
 - I will purchase a meter within two weeks.
 - I will attend the class on monitoring.
 - Then I will check my blood glucose once a day for the following six weeks.
- Step 5: Evaluate your progress.
- Step 6: Reward yourself for a job well done. Or if you slipped and did not monitor for one or more days, say to yourself, “So, I did not monitor three days this week, but I did monitor four days. Next week, I will go back to checking every day.”

Don't forget:

- Taking care of yourself and managing diabetes may require you to make changes in your behavior.
- Some people may not be ready to make a change, while others have already taken steps to make the change a habit.
- There are barriers that can make change more difficult.
- One way to overcome barriers to change is to identify what the barriers are and how to overcome them.
- To be successful, don't try to make too many changes at one time.
- Support from family, friends and your health care team is important.
- A positive attitude is necessary.
- Behaviors are a result of thoughts and feelings.