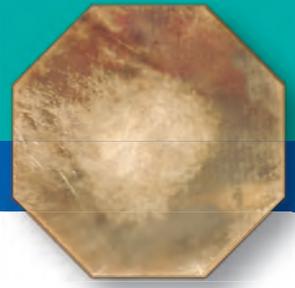




LIVING A BALANCED LIFE WITH DIABETES:

Dealing with Stress and Making Healthy Food Choices

National Diabetes Education Program



DIABETES, STRESS, AND HEALTHY FOOD CHOICES

Diabetes is very common among American Indians and Alaska Natives. Yet, for most people, diabetes is only one of the many things in their lives that they have to worry about. At times, work, school, family issues, or other things in life can also be hard to manage.

Different people handle stress in different ways. Some people turn to food as a way to deal with their feelings. Some people may eat too much when they feel down or stressed. They may turn to high-calorie foods like fast food, ice cream, cake, or other snack foods to feel better.

Other people who are stressed may not have a good appetite. They may avoid food or not eat a lot.

Eating too much or not eating enough as a way of dealing with stress can make it hard for you to take care of yourself and your diabetes. Stress and some foods, like white rice, white bread, cookies, pies, or cake, can all raise your blood sugar level. Not eating enough food can cause low blood sugar. If you have diabetes, it is important that you make healthy food choices to keep your blood sugar levels under control. Be aware of the times when you feel down and the kinds of foods you eat when you are stressed. If you find that you eat high-calorie foods when you are feeling down, try having healthy foods around the house to snack on. Healthy snacks include non-fat/no sugar ice cream, whole wheat bread or crackers, low-fat cheese, or half a banana.

TIPS TO HANDLE STRESS

When you feel stressed:

- Talk with an elder about your concerns.
- Be with others that you have fun with.
- Do something nice for someone else.
- Take a nature walk.
- Learn a new activity, like fishing, horseback riding, or some other things that you might enjoy doing with others.

Be sure to also talk to your health care team (diabetes educator, dietitian, doctor, nurse, psychologist, or social worker), your spiritual counselor, or some other person that you trust. They can help you get the support you need.

Make Healthy Food Choices

If you have diabetes, it is important to eat healthy foods to help keep your blood sugar levels under control. Make healthy food choices:

- Eat a colorful variety of fruits and vegetables.
- Choose whole grain foods—whole wheat bread and crackers, oatmeal, brown rice, and cereals.
- Limit the amount of solid fats and sugars when cooking or eating by trimming fat from meat, using less butter or margarine, and using less sugar.
- Make your meals lighter by using nonfat or low-fat milk, cheese, or mayonnaise. Use cooking spray instead of oil.
- Eat a healthy snack between meals.
- Choose water to drink.



LEARN MORE ABOUT DIABETES:

National Diabetes Education Program

1-888-693-NDEP (6337)

www.YourDiabetesInfo.org

www.YourDiabetesInfo.org/resources/diabetes-healthsense/

Indian Health Service

Families- Healthy Eating

www.ihs.gov/HeadStart/index.cfm?module=hs_families_healthy_eating

American Diabetes Association

1-800-DIABETES (342-2383)

www.diabetes.org

National Diabetes Information Clearinghouse

www.diabetes.niddk.nih.gov

1-800-860-8747

LEARN MORE ABOUT DIABETES

EDUCATORS NEAR YOU:

American Association of Diabetes Educators

1-800-338-DMED (3633)

www.diabeteseducator.org

LEARN MORE ABOUT NUTRITION AND HEALTHY EATING:

American Dietetic Association

1-800-877-1600

www.eatright.org

CDC's Nutrition and Physical Activity website

www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/publicat.htm

MyPyramid Plan

www.mypyramid.gov



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www.YourDiabetesInfo.org or 1-888-693-NDEP (6337), TTY: 1-866-569-1162