

4 ways to help others with diabetes

Diabetes affects millions of Americans. Although diabetes can be challenging, it can also be managed with proper health care.

People with diabetes often need to change the way they eat and may need to exercise more and make other lifestyle changes. These changes can be hard for many people. But support from family and friends can make these things easier for them.

If you have a loved one with diabetes, try supporting them with these tips.



Recognize blood sugar problems

Signs of low blood sugar (hypoglycemia):

- Sudden mood changes or anger
- Feeling very tired, yawning
- Sweating or twitching
- Loss of coordination
- Inability to talk or think clearly
- Seizures
- Feeling faint or passing out

If you notice signs of low blood sugar, offer the person a piece of sugary candy and take them to the emergency room. Or call 911.

Signs of high blood sugar (hyperglycemia):

- Feeling very thirsty
- Extreme fatigue
- Blurred vision
- Having to urinate more than normal

If a person is having high blood sugar too often, they should call their doctor right away. It needs medical attention.



1. Learn about diabetes.

If you understand the disease, you'll be able to better understand what they're going through. Use reputable sources like government health websites and the American Diabetes Association.



2. Eat what they eat.

Talk with your loved one about their diabetes eating plan, and buy foods they can eat. Avoid buying or eating foods that are "off limits" for them. This makes their diet easier and can also help improve your own health!



3. Try exercising together.

Walks, swimming, bike rides and trips to the gym can be more enjoyable with another person. Be sure the exercises you choose are safe for both of you, and ask your doctor first if you have any health conditions.



4. Recognize signs of a problem.

Get to know the signs and symptoms of blood sugar that is too high or too low (see sidebar on this page). You'll be able to help your loved one get the help they need if this happens.

