

Feel Well

Chapter 2

Sleep, Stress, Anxiety and Depression

You Will Learn About:

1. What it means to have a 'good night sleep'
 - a. How a good night sleep is different from a bad night sleep
 - b. Tips for a better night sleep
 - c. What sleep apnea is
2. What stress is and how you can manage it
3. What anxiety is and how you can manage it
4. What depression is and how you can manage it

1. A Good Night Sleep

What does it mean to have a good night sleep and a bad night sleep?

Getting a good night sleep is linked to better health. A good night sleep is also linked to better mood, less pain and clearer thinking. Adults between 18 and 65 years of age should get 7 to 8 hours of sleep each night.

There are a number of ways to know if you have a bad night sleep. A bad night sleep means you get:

- Too little sleep (less than 6 hours), **or**
- Too much sleep (more than 9 hours a night), **or**
- Inconsistent sleep (going to sleep and waking up at very different times each night)

Getting a bad night sleep is a problem if it happens three nights or more each week. If this happens, you will notice that it is hard to get through your day. For example:

- You may run out of energy in the afternoon. You may have to take a nap or have coffee, tea, or a snack for energy
- You may find it hard to focus at work
- You may get annoyed easily and feel moody

Getting a bad night sleep can make it harder to manage your blood sugar in the morning. A bad night sleep can also make pain problems worse.

Tips for getting a good night sleep

Getting a good night sleep improves your health. Once you have better sleep habits, you will have more energy during the day. Your mood will improve too.

Follow the tips below to help you have a good night sleep:

- Be active during the day
- Go to bed and wake up at the same time every day
- Keep your room cool and dark
- Remove devices. This means no computers, television or smart phones.
- Take one hour to relax before bed. To relax you might take a hot bath, listen to music, read, watch TV, or knit
- Limit drinking alcohol or doing exercise less than four hours before bed

What is sleep apnea?

Sleep apnea means you stop breathing when you sleep. You stop breathing because the air passage to your lungs gets blocked. The air passage is blocked by soft tissue in the back of your throat. This block makes your stress system wake you up so you can start to breathe again.

Sleep apnea makes your stress system wake you up as many as 30 times every hour to breathe. When you wake up this often you cannot get into a deep sleep at night. You wake up feeling like you did not sleep at all.

Sleep apnea makes your health worse. Each time your stress system wakes you up to breathe, your blood sugar goes up. You will notice that your blood sugar is high in the morning if you have sleep apnea. Sleep apnea also makes your blood pressure and cholesterol go up.

Sleep apnea is common in people living with type 2 diabetes (it is found in half of the people living with type 2 diabetes). You are more likely to have a heart attack or a stroke if you do not treat your sleep apnea (your risk is 4 times higher).

The symptoms of sleep apnea are:

- Loud snoring
- Feeling very tired during the day
- You stop breathing at night (other people may have noticed)
- High blood pressure

If you have some of these symptoms you may have sleep apnea. Ask your doctor if you should go for a sleep test.

2. Stress

What is stress and how can I manage it?

Stress is how your body reacts to a rise in demands in your life. Diabetes causes a rise in demands. As a result, diabetes often causes stress. When these demands do not go away you may begin to feel like you have no control in your life.

Diabetes can also make you feel weak and exposed. You may feel hopeless and helpless as you try to manage your diabetes. Stress changes your mood and lowers your drive to get things done. These things include managing your diabetes.

Change your life and make a choice to do so. Making a choice to change will lower your stress. Focus on things you can control and let go of things you cannot. Each person feels stress differently. Your thoughts, actions and how you react to something can improve how you deal with stress. Practice the skills below to manage your stress. Most of these skills can be learned within a week.

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- Name the feeling you have and choose to change anyway. For example, 'I feel out of control,' 'I feel like this is too much,' or 'I feel helpless'. Once you accept how you feel do something that helps you connect with your body
- Notice your body's signals. Knowing when these signals happen can take away your feeling of being out of control. If this does not work take the time to talk to a friend (someone you can talk to honestly). See if you can find one small step you can start with to make healthy changes
- Relaxation techniques (such as muscle relaxation)
- Diaphragmatic breathing (learning to breathe from your diaphragm or stomach)
- Mindful breathing
- Visualization
- Affirmations (think good things about yourself)
- Meditation

Take action:

- Talk to your doctor. Your doctor will help you with your stress
- Join a group, connect with old friends, get involved in your community, or volunteer. All of these activities will help you feel less stressed
- Get active. Find an exercise that you enjoy and that is safe. Try to get at least 20 to 30 minutes of exercise most days of the week

3. Anxiety

What is anxiety and how can I manage it?

Anxiety is a very strong feeling of being nervous or worried. Anxiety is common when you have diabetes. Anxiety can affect how well you manage your diabetes. Anxiety can mean you are less able to take care of yourself.

Anxiety has many symptoms. The symptoms of anxiety are listed below. Think about how you have been feeling over the past 2 weeks. You may have anxiety if you are:

- Not able to relax
- Very worried with fears that are silly
- Feeling tense
- Finding it hard to focus
- In a bad mood
- Not able to be patient
- Having trouble falling asleep or staying asleep
- Short of breath
- Having problems with your bowels [such as nausea, gas, bloating, stomach discomfort, diarrhea (poo is loose or watery), or constipation (trouble having a poo)]

Take action:

- Talk to your doctor. Your doctor will help you know if you have anxiety. If you have anxiety your doctor may prescribe medicines. Your doctor may also refer you to another health care provider (such as a psychiatrist, psychologist or social worker)

- Join a group, connect with old friends, get involved in your community or volunteer. All of these activities will help you feel less anxious
- Get active. Find an exercise that you enjoy and that is safe. Try to get at least 20 to 30 minutes of exercise most days of the week

4. Depression

What is depression and how can I manage it?

Depression is a constant feeling of apathy, sadness or loss. Depression can affect your thoughts, behaviours and feelings. Depression is common in people with diabetes. When you are depressed, your diabetes control lowers. Being depressed means you may not take good care of your diabetes.

Depression has many symptoms. The symptoms of depression are listed below. Think about your mood over the past 2 weeks. You may have depression if you:

- Do not enjoy the activities that you often enjoyed
- Feel hopeless or sad
- Have a hard time falling asleep or staying asleep
- Have low energy
- Have changes in how you eat, either more or less
- Have bad thoughts about yourself
- Find it hard to focus
- Have lost your interest in sex
- Feel angry or get annoyed easily
- Have thoughts of death or suicide. Talk to someone (such as your doctor, family member or friend) right away if you are having thoughts of death or suicide

Take action:

- Talk to your doctor. Your doctor will help you know if you have depression. If you have depression your doctor may prescribe medicine. Your doctor may also send you to another health care provider (such as a psychiatrist, psychologist or social worker)
- Be social. Join a group, connect with old friends, get involved in your community or volunteer. All of these activities will help you feel less depressed
- Get active. Find an exercise that you enjoy and that is safe. Try to get at least 20 to 30 minutes of exercise most days of the week

Summary

- A good night sleep is important for good health. Talk to your doctor about a sleep study to screen for sleep apnea
- Stress, anxiety and depression can make it hard to manage your diabetes. Talk to your doctor about how you are feeling