



Understanding the Link Between Diabetes and Depression

If you have diabetes, you should know that, according to the American Diabetes Association (ADA), you may have a greater risk of developing depression than those without diabetes.

Why the increased risk?

According to the ADA, someone with diabetes may face an increased risk of depression. The reasons for this include:

- **Stress of daily diabetes management.** Having to manage a complex condition may cause someone to feel isolated from his or her friends and family.
- **Loss of control and increased feeling of helplessness.** Those who have diabetes, as well as complications from it (e.g., nerve damage), may feel as if they are not in control of the condition, their overall health or their future.

Can depression worsen diabetes?

People who have depression and diabetes may find that having depression makes diabetes management much harder. If a person with diabetes is depressed and has no energy, then he or she may feel overwhelmed by routine diabetes-related tasks such as blood sugar testing.

Likewise, if a person with diabetes is depressed, he or she may struggle with adhering to a regular diet. The result may be an unhealthy fluctuation in blood sugar levels.

What does depression look like?

- Loss of pleasure and energy
- Changes in sleep patterns and/or appetite
- Trouble concentrating
- Nervousness
- Guilt
- Persistent sadness
- Suicidal thoughts

It's important to note that poor control of diabetes can actually cause symptoms that resemble depression. Extreme blood sugar levels can cause fatigue and anxiety and can interrupt sleep patterns, and low levels can lead to hunger and overeating.

Help is available – and important to get

When someone with depression and diabetes gets treatment for depression, he or she may find it easier to manage diabetes, which may result in overall improvements in long-term health.

No matter what health challenges you may be facing, it's important to keep an open dialogue with your doctor about your concerns so you can achieve your best level of health both physically and emotionally.

Source: American Diabetes Association



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