

Anxiety and Diabetes: What to Know

Hearing from your doctor that you have diabetes (or are prediabetic) brings up questions, concerns, and fears. It can make you feel worried, and that's normal.

Along with learning how to manage your condition, you need to also address how you feel emotionally. How you feel can affect how you accept and adjust to your situation. It can also affect your overall health.

Living with diabetes can be a source of anxiety. And that anxiety can change the way you care for yourself. How you care for yourself can affect your diabetes. That cycle shows you why it's so important to address the anxiety you may be feeling.

How do you know whether you are experiencing anxiety?

When you feel fear or worry about day-to-day things or what might happen in the future, and it feels as if you can't stop feeling it, it's called anxiety. It can seem like it is taking over your thoughts and even affect you physically. You can start to have anxiety when you're diagnosed with diabetes even if you've never felt anxious before. When you have diabetes, it is worth noting that sometimes it's hard to tell the difference between an episode of anxiety and an episode of low blood sugar. The physical symptoms can be the same including shakiness, fast heart rate, irritability, nausea, difficulty concentrating, and sensations of panic.

As you are adjusting to learning about diabetes and how your life may need to change to manage it, it is common to worry. People who have been diagnosed with diabetes also get diagnosed with anxiety 20% more than people without diabetes.

If you are experiencing anxiety and it's affecting your overall wellbeing, talk to your provider. Your Crossover care team can talk to you about how you feel and how to address your symptoms.

What are some common things you might feel anxious about?

- **The unknown: What might happen in the future in life or with your body**
- **Learning new things like how to take care of your health or physical limitations**
- **How to adjust your life and nutrition to manage your condition**
- **Whether your quality of life will stay the same**

How to manage your anxiety about diabetes:

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First, remember you don't have to handle this alone. Your care team is here for you and can help you every step of the way. Your needs and how you feel will change over time. The steps below can help you adjust slowly and manage your anxiety.

1. Learn all you can—knowledge is power

Your Crossover care team along with the specialists you need can help here. Your nurse, dietician or health coach, mental health providers, and others can educate, support, and direct you to information you may need.

Helpful tip: Bring a list of questions with you to your appointments. After every visit you may have more questions to add, or answers to fill in. Keeping yourself organized can help you feel more in control of what's happening with your health.

2. Connect with others

You don't have to manage your condition or how you feel about it by yourself. Ask for help or support from friends and family, people who have experience with diabetes, or a peer support group.

3. Start to make lifestyle changes

Your physical health and emotional health are connected. So it makes sense that some of the changes your provider recommends to help manage your diabetes are also good for managing the anxiety you feel. Things like physical activity and eating nutritious foods can make you feel more in control of your health and your future. This can reduce your anxiety.

4. Accept your diagnosis and how you feel about it

You're adjusting to a lot. But accepting your diagnosis will help you face the change ahead. Recognize how you feel about it (both positive and negative). The more you accept your new reality, the more you can move forward in a positive direction.

5. Talk with a mental health provider

Talking to a professional who knows how to pave your path can feel like such a relief. Group or individual therapy can help you address how you feel and how to approach your condition. It can also make you feel less alone on your new journey.

6. Talk to your provider about whether medication can help

Medication may help you manage the emotional health effects of diabetes. Talk to your provider or mental health therapist about whether this is a good option for you. They will evaluate your needs and let you know if antidepressants or anti-anxiety medication is right for you.

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Resources

Below are some resources and organizations with articles and access to support groups:

[American Diabetes Association](#) (ADA)

[Behavioral Diabetes Institute](#) (BDI)

[Crossover Health](#)—connect with your care team if you have been diagnosed with Diabetes Mellitus (Type 1 or 2), have been told you are prediabetic, or have gestational diabetes/glucose intolerance.