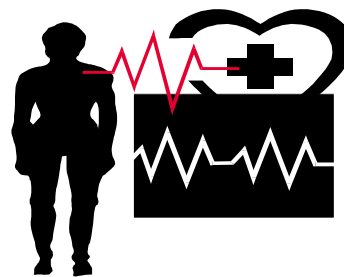


DIABETES CONTROL MATTERS

BE THE LEADER OF YOUR HEALTH CARE TEAM



The relationship between you and your health care professionals has tremendous potential for success or for failure. You look to your health care team to make you well. You have all sorts of reasonable expectations, and maybe some unreasonable ones as well. The healthcare team involves coordination and communication: multiple players all working together for your benefit. You are the central person on your health care team. You make the decisions about what you do on a daily basis.

You may be the kind of person who always follows directions or you may be the kind of person who always wants to do it your way. Whichever you are, **you are the one who leads your life and experiences the consequences of your actions.** The healthcare team is there to guide, educate and support you in your decisions toward good diabetes control.

Who's On Your Team?

X YOU

- Primary Care Physician
- Endocrinologist or Diabetologist
(as needed or as consultant)
- Diabetes Nurse Educator (CDE)
- Dietitian (CDE)
- Ophthalmologist
- Exercise Specialist / Physical Therapist
- Podiatrist / Foot Care Specialist
- Social Worker
- Mental Health Professional


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Working With Your Health Care Team

- ✓ **Set reasonable expectations** – you have a right to expect communication, honesty, competence, professional standards, and quality care.
- ✓ **The time element** - you deserve whatever time is necessary, you shouldn't feel pushed out the door, but the reality is you are not the only patient. Ask for a specific amount of time, say 15-30 minutes, and use it wisely instead of having unlimited expectations and being disappointed.
- ✓ **Specialist or Generalist** –Your primary care provider will know a lot about all aspects of health care, and the specialist will have special knowledge and focus with respect to your diabetes. Neither one will know your diabetes as well as you do. A good professional is one who will admit, "I don't know", but will help you find the answer. Good healthcare is not a quiz show where the smartest doctor or the smoothest talker wins.
- ✓ **The Person in the White Coat** – Is a health professional allowed to feel frustration, disappointment, defensiveness, or even anger? Yes! Expect professionalism, but you wouldn't want a person with absolutely no emotion.
- ✓ **Making a List & Checking it Twice** – Take your records to every visit and have them in good order. Don't waste 15 minutes on idle chit-chat and then spring into the important issues just when the visit is scheduled to end.
- ✓ **Changing Horses** – Try not to worry about speaking out and asking questions. If you are not getting what you need from someone on your team, talk to them, if you're still not satisfied, make a change. The important thing is for you to have your health care needs met, but remember there may not be a solution to every problem.
- ✓ **Never Stop Learning** – Having diabetes is a continuing learning process as more becomes known about the disease and treatment options change. You should expect comprehensive training at the time you find out you have diabetes and you should seek additional opportunities for the rest of your life. You may choose to learn by reading, attending support groups and programs or through periodic meetings with members of your health care team. Always use reputable sources and never stop asking questions.