Section 7

Adjusting to diabetes

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Help with how you are feeling about having type 2 diabetes

When you are diagnosed with type 2 diabetes, it affects you and the whole family. It will take a bit of time to get used to it. During this time, your usual ways of coping with things may be different. You may feel confused, scared and sad. A new diagnosis of diabetes may create difficult emotional issues for young people.

Remember that you have a lot of support and will be OK.

Social workers

The diabetes social workers are members of the team looking after you. They will support you and your family as you deal with your new diabetes in day to day life.

You will meet with them when you are first diagnosed and then time and again, until you are 18. They will provide you with a range of support and help including:

- counselling
- supporting you and your family through times of crisis and distress
- advocacy
- co-planning for discharge from hospital
- referral to community agencies and support services
- providing information about community resources, accessing practical and material assistance.

Tips to help you

1. **Return to everyday activities such as school**
2. **Start new routines for food and exercise**
3. **Be kind to yourself - understand what is happening and the need to follow medical advice**
4. **Talk about your feelings and worries to friends and family**
5. **Make an effort to spend time with friends**

For parents

Children look to their parents for support about how to manage their own emotions. This can be challenging for parents as they may also be struggling with their own feelings. It is important that parents and/or caregivers get support from family members, friends, support groups, GPs or other professionals, and the diabetes team.

Each child and adolescent is an individual and may experience different emotional responses at different times including:

- difficulty coping with the emotional reaction of family members
- feeling anxious about having type 2 diabetes amongst their peers
- frustration over the daily tasks of managing type 2 diabetes
- feeling embarrassed about their type 2 diabetes
- fearful of ‘being different’
- worrying about school, issues around bullying.

For parents

Family relationships

With type 2 diabetes, motivation and parental/carer encouragement is vital. A crisis puts stress on a family and close relationships. You may find yourself being irritable. Remember that you are all under stress and these reactions are normal.

Sometimes partners or other family members feel ‘out of step’ with their reactions to the diagnosis. One parent may be tearful and want to talk about things — the other becomes practical and wants to ‘get on with it’. These are different ways of coping with the same situation.

Lifestyle change for everyone in the house is important to support the child with type 2 diabetes. Siblings of the child with diabetes also need to have their feelings understood. They need to know what is going on and be given a simple explanation about diabetes. Some may fear that they too will get diabetes. Some siblings may react to the extra attention given to the child with diabetes. They also need support and reassurance.

Chronic Disease Management Plan

Children with a chronic medical condition and complex care needs such as type 1 and type 2 diabetes are eligible to access a **maximum of five allied health services per calendar year with a Medicare rebate**.

Your GP will prepare a Chronic Disease Management Plan to facilitate referral to the relevant allied health services, which can include:

- exercise physiologist
- occupational therapist
- diabetes educator
- dietician.

Please speak to your GP or your diabetes team for further information.

Mental health management plans

Adjustment to a chronic condition can be challenging. A mental health management plan is available through your GP. Your doctor can arrange referral to psychological support services in your area, with a Medicare rebate for up to 10 appointments.

Please speak to your GP or your diabetes team for further information.

For parents

Helpful links

The Patient Assisted Travel Scheme (PATS)

The Patient Assisted Travel Scheme (PATS) provides permanent country residents with financial assistance when travelling more than 100km to access the nearest eligible medical specialist service (including Telehealth).

PATS provides a subsidy to eligible patients, however it does not cover all costs associated with travel and accommodation.

For more information about PATS visit www.wacountry.health.wa.gov.au/pats or contact your local hospital or regional PATS office

National Diabetes Services Scheme (NDSS)

The NDSS is an initiative from the Australian Government which provides subsidised prices on a range of approved diabetes consumables, such as needle tips and blood glucose strips.

To be eligible to register you must:

- live in Australia
- hold a Medicare card
- have a diagnosis of type 2 diabetes.

Registration is free. You will be provided with a registration form at diagnosis to complete which can be signed by your diabetes educator or doctor.
Go to www.ndss.com.au

Diabetes WA

Diabetes WA is a not-for-profit organisation which aims to provide training and support to school staff, NDSS product information, education programs and links to support groups. You can access monthly updates on research, programs, products and services.

For more information, visit www.diabeteswa.com.au