Tips for Coping With Diabetes Over Time

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Tips for Coping With Diabetes

Coping with diabetes can be difficult, but having people watch you and make judgments about you can be even tougher.

Most diabetes sufferers will attract small remarks about a food choice, and when these comments build up, they can weigh on your mood and your energy levels. After all, you're the one with the condition!

Even if you wish you could mute the commentary, it's better to find ways to work with people rather than against their well-meaning but tedious observations.

The Value of Gentle Reminders

Reminders can be very helpful, and can demonstrate that someone cares for you. Your loved ones want to help keep you as healthy as possible, and it's natural for them to try to take part in your treatment in order to feel a sense of control. What they don't realize is that your coping with diabetes is trying enough, reminders from loved ones can also spark defensive reactions, even if they're founded on the best intentions.

Remember that most of the people around you are genuinely concerned about your well-being, and they simply need to find a better way to express it. It's usually better to ignore their remark and get on with your day; in other cases, you'll need to do something to smooth out tense emotions and pave the way for better interactions in the future.

Be Proactive, Not Reactive

The next time someone tries to police your actions, take action. Rather than starting an argument or suffering in silence, use well-meaning caution as an opportunity to tell your friends and family how they can *really* help you:

- **Have a family discussion.** Conversing with everyone all at once can eliminate lots of repetition (and frustration). Sit down with your family and discuss some of the ways they might help you handle your diet, lifestyle and diabetes management regimen, while still leaving room for their suggestions. Once they understand that lecturing you on every food choice won't help you feel better or stay healthy, they're bound to change their approach.
- **Justify your actions.** Sometimes what you do might seem like a terrible decision to an observer, because they don't understand the subtleties of your disease. Explain that having a single cookie, for example, won't send you into diabetic shock when your blood sugar is under control and you've accounted for the carbohydrates and calories. Paint a clearer picture of your condition for the people you love instead of simply suffering through their nagging.

- **Ask for company.** The next time a friend or family member gets on your case about something you did or

did not do for your diabetes, ask them if they'd be willing to go one step further and share some of your lifestyle changes. Invite them to visit the gym, attend a new fitness class with you, or experiment with some healthy new recipes in the kitchen one afternoon.

You know best when it comes to your diabetes, but you also depend on the help and support of the people around you. It's always better to share information, communicate more often and to be honest with your needs so that everyone can feel productive and better equipped to handle any challenge that may arise.