

Making Time for Diabetes Care in a Woman's Busy Life

Women live diverse lives. But one constant for almost all women is too little time. Most women juggle many roles and duties. It's hard to squeeze everything in—doubly hard when you have a disease such as diabetes.

Reviewing how you spend your time can help you manage better. Some diabetes tasks need to be done every day:

- Testing your blood sugar
- Taking pills or insulin and determining how much to take and when to supplement
- Recording test results and medicine doses in your log
- Exercising

Here are ways to give your diabetes the daily attention it deserves:

- Don't feel guilty about making diabetes care a top goal. Staying healthy makes it easier to be a good employee, wife, mother, and daughter.
- Make diabetes care part of your everyday routine. You'll be more likely to exercise, for example, if you have a time set aside for it.
- Make daily to-do lists. Mark the most urgent activities.
- Use memory aids:
 - ✓ Link testing and taking medicines to things you do every day at the same time, such as brushing your teeth.

- ✓ Keep your medicines and glucose meter near where you do these acts.
- ✓ Create rituals. Do things in the same order in the same place at the same time each day.
- ✓ Set a timer to remind you of your next blood test or medicine dose.
- ✓ Make a daily chart of tasks. Check off each medicine as you take it and each blood test as you do it.

Some diabetes tasks are done only when needed:

- Deciding what foods to buy, cook, and eat
- Reviewing your blood sugar records and food records
- Testing your urine for ketones
- Seeing your health care providers
- Getting lab work done
- Filling prescriptions and buying supplies
- Traveling to and from and waiting at the clinic, lab, and drugstore

Planning for these is much harder than fitting in daily tasks. They don't occur regularly. The time they require is less predictable. And many take hours instead of minutes.

Still, there are many ways to free up time for such tasks.

Start by setting personal, family, and career goals. Rank these by importance. You want to spend most of your time and effort on important goals. Then look at how you spend your time each week. Ask yourself:

- Are there ways you can spend your time more usefully? Do you watch TV shows that you don't really enjoy? Catch up on work or chores during that time instead.
- Are you using any time inefficiently? Do you go to the grocery twice a week instead of once? Planning ahead to avoid double effort can free up large blocks of time.

If you still have too little time:

- Delegate. If your husband or children have time to goof off, but you are always frantically busy, something is out of whack.
- Say "no" more often.
- Plan your schedule around your natural body clock. Do important tasks when you are most alert and energetic.
- Cut down health care visits by doubling up. Try to see the dietitian and have lab work done on the same day you visit your provider.