

What Can a Diabetes Support Group Mean to You?

What Is a Diabetes Support Group?

A diabetes support group is a self-help group for people interested in diabetes. It can help you learn more about diabetes and can offer you emotional and social support.

What Can You Learn?

You can learn from diabetes experts and other people dealing with the disease about how to take better care of yourself. You can also help others by sharing your own diabetic experiences. Many people with diabetes have never talked to anyone else with the disease. This group can show you that you are not alone in dealing with your problems and feelings.

What Needs to be Done to Start a Support Group?

To start a group, think of all the other people interested in diabetes that might be willing to meet regularly. Offer to help contact some of them. Help plan the first meeting if it has not yet been held. If the group is already meeting, get involved—become an officer; join a committee; help with snacks; or do whatever you have the time and talent to do.

What Will I Need to Do to be a Good Member?

Besides finding new members and becoming a leader, you will need to listen well to other members and keep what is said confidential. The group is built on trust, and personal information may be shared that only the members should hear.

You must also give everyone a chance to ask questions and to share ideas at the meetings. If you need more in-depth information from a speaker, you may want to arrange to see the person later rather than take too much of the meeting time.

You should also use what you learn carefully. Group meetings do not substitute for regular medical care. Always check out any new idea with your medical team before you try it.

Is a Support Group for Me?

A support group is not for everyone. Do you—

- Need support from others who understand what it is like to have diabetes?
- Feel ready to listen to others with an open mind and to share your experiences?
- Think you can offer leadership to the group?
- Think you are willing to commit time and energy to the group?

If you answer yes to these questions, then a support group may be for you.

You may need to leave the group for many reasons. It is important that you tell the group that you no longer will be involved. Give a brief reason for why you are leaving, so that others will not worry about you. If the group has problems that are causing you to leave, tactfully discuss them with the leader of the entire group. Your input may help the group become more successful.

THE SUCCESS OF THE GROUP DEPENDS ON ITS MEMBERS.