

Diabetes: Setting the Stage for Change

You found ways to get around what was stopping you from making a change. You know what triggers your unhealthy behaviour. You stay away from those situations. You have successfully made a change in your life.

Strategies to Get to Stage 5

Get support. *“I know whom I can turn to if I need help or motivation.”*

Use opportunities for change. *“Let’s all go for a walk after our big family dinner.”*

Stage 5: Maintenance

“I’ve kept exercising, even when I was travelling on a business trip.”

“Now that we’re eating a healthy diet, even my spouse has lost weight.”

“I’m going to look into getting a new pair of golf shoes - now that I’m playing regularly.”

Your healthy behaviour is becoming routine. You feel confident that you can maintain the change in your behaviour. You have reasonable expectations of yourself. You know that it is not all or nothing. You know that you are in control.

Strategies to Stay at Stage 5

You now have met people with similar goals. Keep in touch with them.

Try out the changes you have made in different situations. Join a walking or hiking club. Become a member of the rec centre.

Relapse

Be patient and self-aware. You’re doing a great job. Don’t worry if you have a relapse. Relapse is common. Just pick up where you left off. Find new motivation. Or remember what motivated you in the first place. Contact your support people. This includes friends and health professionals.

Where are you in this process?

Making and maintaining changes is a long process. Success has a lot to do with our beliefs about the need for change. It also has to do with our self-awareness, our motivation, and our ideas about the pros and cons of making these changes.

In the management of diabetes, we need to understand that self-care is an ongoing process. As we go through the process, we become good problem solvers.

For more copies, go online at <http://vch.eduhealth.ca> or email phe@vch.ca and quote Catalogue No. **FL.850.D52**
© Vancouver Coastal Health, February 2008

The information in this document is intended solely for the person to whom it was given by the health care team.
www.vch.ca

Lions Gate Hospital

231 East 15th Street
North Vancouver BC V7L 2L7
Tel: 604-988-3131

You are the one who is living with diabetes. You are the one who is managing your condition. You are the one who is looking after yourself in areas of nutrition, exercise and emotional health.

You are self-managing your diabetes. This means you are the expert on what you need to do. You are in charge of getting as much information and support as you need to prepare yourself for the changes you need to make.

It is tough making changes. It's hard enough to make one change in our life, for example 'to quit smoking'. But people living with diabetes must make several changes all at the same time. It makes self care for people with diabetes very complicated.

Most people go through a series of stages when making a change. Learning about these stages will help as you make the changes you need to successfully self manage your diabetes.

Stage 1: Pre-Contemplation

"I feel okay. Why should I make any change at all?"

"I could never stick to an exercise program - why even bother?"

You are not aware of the importance of making a change. Your confidence about making any change is low. People at this stage usually don't feel any symptoms of diabetes.

Strategies to Get to Stage 2:

Increase awareness: *"I'm learning that diabetes can be managed."*

Focus on motivation: *"If I start exercising, I'll feel more energetic and can play with my grandchildren."*

Find the benefits: *"Checking my glucose levels regularly will help keep them under control."*

Stage 2: Contemplation

"I'll start to work out in a few months when I'm not so busy."

"I know I should reduce the fat in my diet, but I'll have to buy special food and cook different meals for my family."

"I can quit smoking whenever I want. I just don't want to yet."

You are actively considering making a change. This is the time when most people start to seek information, examine their lifestyles and seek the help of others to support future changes.

Strategies to Get to Stage 3:

Get information about choices: *"So managing diabetes is not an all or nothing kind of thing."*

Get Support: *"I'm going to find out who can help me make the changes I need to make."*

Find out more about the benefits: *"Exercise will help me lose weight. I will have more energy, too."*

Stage 3: Preparation

"I wonder if I will need my doctor's permission to start exercising."

"What programs does the rec centre offer?"

You're ready to change. You're confident that you can do it. You have found out what is stopping you from making a change. You have found someone to turn to for support. At this stage, people have started to take small steps towards changing their behaviour.

Strategies to Get to Stage 4:

Make plans to practice: *"I'll schedule the exercise time in my calendar."*

Find out about triggers and temptations. *"Will I want to start smoking again when I feel stressed? Will I stop going out for my walks when it rains?"*

Check out resources and skills required. *"I am going to give two exercise classes a try with my exercise buddy."*

Stage 4: Action

"I'm getting to the rec centre three times a week, no matter how busy I get at work."

"I now set up my blood glucose test strips on the dining room table after each meal to remind myself to test before the next meal."

"I now go for a short walk when I feel stressed. It clears my head and I don't even think about a cigarette."