

Coping with the everyday turns and twists on the lane

Personal life situations or circumstances play a strong role in determining how well a patient is able to cope with living with type 2 diabetes.

Personal life situations vary from person to person but let us highlight some life situations that place additional demands.

1. A mother/father who must take care of a baby or toddler or young children
2. A caregiver to elderly persons
3. A person working multiple shifts in a day to make ends meet
4. An executive who must juggle multiple meetings and roles to keep the organization functioning.
5. Commuting long distance to work and enduring long hours in traffic

These are just few examples. There are many demanding situations out there. We will share general tips for coping with these situations as well as living with type 2 diabetes

These tips are;

- **Seek help:** it is important to seek the help of family members, friends, and employees to manage personal life situations that place additional demands on time. For example, if you have children who are still very young, get a caregiver to help with these children. Also ensure you get people to help you manage the additional demands of self-care such as meal-planning and meal preparations
- **Keep a schedule for all self-care activities:** A daily schedule and reminders for taking meals, medications, exercising, family activities, work activities and social activities is very important. This will help you to identify when a family, work or social activity might interfere with a self care routine. For example, an evening outing with work colleagues might clash with the timing for medications and set meals. This helps to plan on how to mitigate the effect of the activity on self care routine. For example, it might involve carrying medications to the meeting or arriving late for the meeting after taking medications etc.
- **Document medication use and self care:** Always use a log book to document when you have taken your medication and the dosage taking. Also document meals taken and physical activities carried out.
- **Use a**
- **Meditation:** This is very helpful for managing emotions even in difficult situations. It is helpful to incorporate meditation practice into physical activity by practicing yoga. It is also helpful to incorporate meditation into eating by practicing mindful eating. Meditation helps to improve focus and enhances positive emotions

Planning for a trip: if you are travelling out of town or out of the country, it is important to consider planning for the following:

- **How to adhere to medications**
 - Quantify and pack the amount of medications you will need on the trip
 - Ensure that medications are in the carry-on bag not the check-in bag

- Label and pack all medications very well to ensure they are allowed to remain in the carry-on bags
- Ensure that there is documentation on how these drugs work
- Take note of time-zone changes and how these affects your schedule for taking medications
- **Effect of the trip on how the medications work in your body**
 - Research on the weather of the destination. This is because warmer climates will demand taking additional water to stay hydrated
 - Anticipate effect of change in time-zone on blood sugar
- **How to maintain monitoring of the health condition**
 - Quantify the amount of blood sugar monitoring devices you will need
 - Pack blood sugar monitoring supplies; two blood sugar meters, lancets, strips, cotton wool, lancing device, batteries
 - Quantify and pack ketone monitoring strips
- **How to maintain physical activity**
 - Identify physical activities that require minimal space and equipment
 - Identify gyms in your destination
 - Maintain your physical activity schedule
- **How to maintain healthy eating**
 - Prepare a meal plan that contain foods that are commonly found in your destination
 - Identify sources of food and meals in your destination
- **Need to carry documentation that shows that you are living with type 2 diabetes**
 - Always carry a tag that clearly shows that you are living with type 2 diabetes.
 - This documentation can be a part of your name tag or hand bands etc.
 - This is very useful when emergencies occur
 - Documentation is also important to enable you explain the reason why you are carrying certain medications
- **Need to avoid blood sugar related emergencies**
 - It is important to stay on the alert to avoid low blood sugar or high blood sugar levels that will lead to medical emergencies.
 - Make sure you continue monitoring your blood sugar
 - As soon as it is getting low, take a sugar containing food. Always have an emergency pack of sugar containing drinks or snacks for such occasions
 - If blood sugar is getting very high for unexplainable reasons, seek help in a health facility in your destination
- **How to receive emergency care while on the trip if the need arises**
 - Discuss your trip with your medical team
 - Work with them to adjust your medications in a safe manner while on a trip
 - Work with them to identify a good travel health insurance cover
 - Identify health facilities that will be able to provide you with medical help in your destination
- **How to maintain insulin use**
 - Quantify the amount of insulin you will need while on a trip

- Ensure you pack enough insulin for the trip
- Quantify and pack enough insulin use supplies such as syringes, insulin pens, insulin pumps, Reservoir cartridges, Infusion sets, Batteries, cotton wools, alcohol swabs etc
- Insulin and syringes and dosing instructions in case the pumps breaks.
- Inform security personnel that you may be carrying or wearing insulin delivery devices such as syringes and insulin pumps. This is because syringes may be considered as sharp objects and not allowed on flights and public transportation. Insulin pumps can trigger off metal detectors.
- Carry an emergency glucagon kit to prevent very low blood sugar

Using insulin effectively

- Label insulin very well. This is to avoid making mistakes when using insulin.
- Document dosing instructions very well to avoid making mistakes with dosing and administration
- Store insulin properly and avoid storing them in extreme temperatures. If you are living in a very warm climate, it is important to store insulin in a cooler pack that will ensure that it is in a stable temperature
- Use insulin for only one month
- Never use insulin after it has expired
- Ensure that separate syringes or pen needles are used for long acting and short acting insulin. That is have a dedicated syringe or pen needle for long acting insulin and another one for short acting insulin
- Work with your medical team to adjust the insulin dosage according to physical activity and diet. Increased physical activity can have a strong impact in reducing blood sugar. Reducing carbohydrate intake can also have strong impact in reducing blood sugar. These scenarios should be considered and the dosage of insulin should be adjusted accordingly.