

Taking Care of You

A Mental Wellness & Diabetes Self-Care Guide

A simple guide to help you notice stress, understand diabetes distress, and make one caring choice when life gets hard.

This guide is for you if...

You know what supports your health, but stress, exhaustion, caregiving, money, emotions, or life demands sometimes make it hard to follow through.

Inside this guide

- What diabetes distress is — and what it is not.
- How to recognize when you are running low.
- How food, stress, and self-care can become connected.
- A simple CARE pause you can use before you automatically push through.
- A small self-care plan for this week.

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1. Managing Your Health Is Emotional Work Too

Living with diabetes or prediabetes often involves more than eating differently or remembering medical instructions. It can also involve ongoing mental and emotional work: making decisions, planning meals, thinking about numbers, dealing with appointments, and staying motivated even when you feel discouraged.

Diabetes distress

The frustration, worry, discouragement, or overwhelm that can come with the ongoing demands of managing diabetes.

Diabetes distress does **not** mean you are failing. It does not automatically mean you have depression. It means that managing your health can feel heavy sometimes.

You may notice diabetes distress when you think things like:

- “I am tired of thinking about this all the time.”
- “I know what I should do, but I do not have anything left.”
- “I already messed up today.”
- “I feel guilty, frustrated, or overwhelmed.”

Remember: Sometimes the issue is not knowledge. Sometimes the issue is capacity.

2. How Do You Know You're Running Low?

Sometimes our behavior notices our distress before we do. Use the questions below to help you recognize when you may be running low.

BODY

How does your body tell you? Headaches, tension, fatigue, poor sleep, stomach issues, feeling drained.

THOUGHTS

What starts happening in your mind? "I can't deal with one more thing." "I'll do it later." "I don't care today." Self-criticism or all-or-nothing thinking.

BEHAVIOR

What do you start doing — or stop doing? Skipping meals, grabbing whatever is easiest, avoiding movement, forgetting medication, canceling appointments, staying up late.

PEOPLE

How do you start showing up with others? Getting irritated, withdrawing, saying yes automatically, telling everyone you're fine when you're not.

Food can also become part of this picture. Sometimes I eat because I'm hungry — and sometimes because I'm stressed, tired, overwhelmed, celebrating, bored, or needing comfort. The goal is not perfection. The goal is to notice what the eating may be doing for you.

3. Before You Automatically Push Through: CARE

When you notice that you are running low, you do not need a perfect plan. Start with one caring pause.

C — Check In

What is happening inside me right now?

A — Acknowledge

What am I feeling or carrying?

R — Recognize What I Need

Food? Rest? Help? Movement? Comfort? Connection? Quiet?

E — Engage One Caring Choice

Not the perfect choice — one caring choice.

*A caring choice takes your health **and** your humanity into account.*

What makes this hard?

Sometimes we know what we need, but everyone else needs something too. If you are used to being dependable, self-reliant, or the person everybody calls, your own needs may not register until you are already depleted.

Ask yourself:

- What part of my own care disappears first when life gets hard?
- What would it mean for my health to matter too?
- What could someone realistically take off my plate this week?
- Who could help without policing me?

4. The Goal Isn't Perfection

Sometimes taking better care of yourself starts with noticing what you need sooner.

Finish this sentence

When I notice _____, I want to try _____.

- I'm getting overwhelmed → ask for help.
- I haven't eaten all day → stop and eat.
- I'm beating myself up → get curious instead.
- I'm exhausted → rest earlier.
- I'm saying yes automatically → pause before answering.

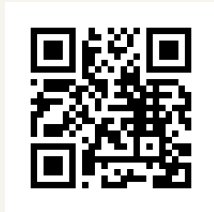


Thank you for spending time with this guide.

I hope it helps you approach your health with more awareness, compassion, and one caring choice at a time.

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