



**Wolverhampton  
Diabetes Care**

## **Depression and Diabetes**

Most people come to cope with their diabetes and carry on with a full and active life but sometimes things can get to be a bit too much and it becomes more difficult to cope.

### **What is 'diabetes burnout'?**

Whether you have had diabetes for years or have been diagnosed recently, staying on top of your diet, medication, testing and everything else that you have to do can be overwhelming, especially if you have complications.

You are not alone if you feel anxious, stressed or find it difficult to cope. Diabetes burnout is an important and common emotional complication of diabetes.

This change in mood, or lack of a feeling of well being, or a feeling of stress can activate a vicious cycle. It saps your energy for doing things, including taking good care of diabetes. People who are depressed tend to be less active, eat less carefully, monitor their blood sugar levels less often and take their medication less regularly. It can all make controlling diabetes much harder.

### **Why me?**

Depression can affect any one at any age but people with diabetes do seem to be more prone as are other people with long term medical conditions.

### **What are the symptoms of depression in diabetes?**

Depression and diabetes burnout affects different people in different ways. It may change the way you feel and think or you may develop physical symptoms. These symptoms include: feeling fed up, feeling worried for no reason, a lack of energy, a feeling of tiredness, headaches, constant aches or pains, no sex drive or not being able to sleep. You may generally feel that you have less enjoyment of life than you used to. Sometimes you may not realise how depressed you are, because it comes on gradually. For others it may strike suddenly.

### **What can be done to help?**

Remember, there may be simple things to be put right to fix any problems with your diabetes. Often these are easily done so you may become less worried. Sometimes you may be worrying for no reason and just need an explanation. The more in control of the situation you are and the better informed you are the better you will feel. Ask for advice and help from your medical team to allay your fears and anxieties.

You may simply need to talk things through with friends or family or to take stock of the situation and reflect on the simple things you could do to make yourself happier or to help you cope better. Some people find being part of a diabetes support group can help. Lifestyle changes with diet, exercise and having a better social life can make a big difference. All of these may be enough to get you through a bad patch.

You may need simple advice or counselling from your medical team or something more from a specialist counsellor or doctor.

Treatment options may include the use of antidepressants. People with diabetes and depression often benefit from antidepressants.

## Seeking advice and what care to expect

Your medical team should give you information, advice and training so that you come to be in charge and control of your diabetes. If you don't feel that way, ask for more help to sort out your diabetes care.

If you feel you are getting into emotional or coping difficulties, talk to someone – don't just keep it to yourself. Your medical team will want to hear of these problems and offer help and advice and treatment if needed. They will check to be sure there isn't some other medical problem that is making you feel bad. They will be able to get more specialised help for you if needed.