

CHANGE WE NEED, NOW

Many diabetes patients do value their health and know what they need to do about their diet and their medication. But very often it is putting the information to task that is a real struggle. Henry Lew, psychologist, National Healthcare Group Polyclinics walks you from “I can do them later” to “I can still manage on my own”.

Procrastination and denial are common. After all, who would want to prick themselves with a small needle and tell themselves they cannot have foods they really want to eat?

Here are some tips that could help diabetes patients to overcome their struggle of procrastinating and denying:

RECOGNISE THE BENEFITS OF GLUCOSE READING

Diabetes is not something you can wish or dream away.

Not testing your blood glucose level does not mean that your blood glucose numbers are in fine shape. Not knowing is not going to change your blood glucose levels.

Instead, taking action to change your diet, exercise and adhering to medication will help you to change your glucose levels. Glucose readings are just numbers. They are not judgments of yourself or your ability to manage your diabetes. They can be used by you and your healthcare provider to adjust your treatment if needed.

Plan to make some changes in your life so that it is not so overwhelming.

For example, if you are eating out and you know you have to test your glucose level before your meal outside, make sure you pack your meter and testing strips in advance so you will remember to take them along.

Change of diet is an investment and savings.

There is no doubt that healthy foods can be expensive. But the money is an investment in your health. Moreover, the more you spend on fruits and vegetables, the more you save in terms of future exorbitant medical bills.

Engage your family.

Food is often the centre of family life. If your family members do not seem supportive of the changes you are trying to make, give them some time to get used to the idea. Help them understand why healthy eating and portion control are so

important. Explain to them that it helps you to feel better, control your blood sugar level, lose excess pounds and prevent diabetes complications, such as heart disease, kidney damage and nerve damage. Besides, healthy foods and portion control are good not only for you but also for everyone else in the family. With support from your loved ones, your new diet habits will soon become a lifestyle habit.

Manage your own self-thoughts.

Sometimes we might need to ask ourselves questions to motivate us further. Some questions for consideration include:

- What are some of the things I could do if I got better which I can't do now?
- What might happen if I got worse and is it worth the effort to avoid the complications?
- What are the good things in my life that are worth some effort to preserve or expand?
- What does my body need from me now?
- How can I make self-care a source of pleasure and good feelings?

References:

www.mayoclinic.com
www.diabetesselfmanagement.com
www.diabetesnet.com

