

So You Have Diabetes...

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When Emma first found out she had diabetes, she just took to her bed and cried. She didn't escape "the curse." That's what she called diabetes after watching her mom go blind and her cousin lose his leg.

Her daughter Josie found Emma curled up like a baby on the couch.

"It doesn't have to be a curse, Mom." She said.

With her mom's permission, Josie called her mom's doctor about the new diagnosis.

"It is shocking at first," the doctor said, "but there are ways to control diabetes and your mom is a strong, smart woman, and we will help her figure it out."

Then the doctor shared some good information about diabetes with Josie. And now, Josie was reminding her mom that she could live a good and healthy life even with diabetes.

"Even my nana had diabetes." Emma said, still feeling the grief of the new diagnosis.

"But this isn't your nana's diabetes, Mom."

Emma sat up on her bed and looked at her wise daughter.

"This is your diabetes, Mom, and we are going to help you make the very best of it."

This is just one story of countless stories we Latinas have witnessed and lived, and the

declaration — “This is not your nana’s diabetes,” is an important one.

Diabetes care has come a long way since our grandparents and uncles and aunts suffered through this devastating disease. And by all estimations, diabetes can still be devastating to us as Latinos. But it doesn’t have to be that way. And this is what this article is about.



Support for People with Diabetes:

1. A person with diabetes is not “A diabetic.” They are not the condition. They have a condition, but it is not their identity.
2. A person with diabetes needs family support. That means helping not judging. Avoid punishing or guilting people with diabetes when they overeat. This is not helpful, and can be harmful.
3. Offer pro-active support to the person with diabetes, such as, “Mom, let’s buddy up and go for a walk.” Or “Mom, let’s look at new veggie recipes on De Las Mías and see what we can cook up for dinner.”

If You Have Diabetes...

1. Diabetes education works. Ask the primary doctor in charge to refer you or your loved one to a certified diabetes educator.
2. There are amazing classes that help support people with diabetes. Start at your local health department and find out about the Chronic Disease Self-Management Program and the Diabetes Self-Management Program. Both of these programs were developed by Stanford University and are proven to help people with diabetes. Most of these classes are free. Find out more here: wcdc.gov/learnmorefeelbetter/programs/diabetes.htm. There is also the Diabetes Self-Management Education and Support Program that is more tailored to your own specific needs around diabetes. They are free or low cost depending on your health care. You can learn more about DSMES at: www.cdc.gov/diabetes/dsmes-toolkit/index.html. These resources are available in Spanish and English and they are evidence- based which means you can trust the information and they are proven to work.
3. If you have diabetes, remember, moderation is the key to diabetes management. You don’t have to give up your beloved foods or your way of life to take care of your diabetes.

Here are some healthy eating tips from the American Diabetes Association:

- Eat more fruits and vegetables!
 - Eat lean meats and plant-based protein, such as beans.
 - Eat less sugar.
 - Eat less processed foods.
4. If you are confused about how to eat when you have diabetes, ask your doctor to refer you to a certified nutritionist. Look up diabetes friendly recipes on the De Las Mías App!
 5. Get active! Get at least 30 minutes of physical activity every day for a total of 150 minutes a week. Mover your body. You can do any activity that moves your body, including housework, gardening, walking, swimming, dancing, cycling.
 6. Reduce your stress. Stress is not good for anyone but it is especially not good for people with diabetes. Learn to meditate. Praying the rosary can be a form of deep relaxation. Learn other deep relaxation technique like Tai Chi or Yoga.
 7. If the doctor prescribes meds, take them!
 8. Be a partner with your doctor. If you don't like how a medication feels, call them. Ask for your doctor's help. Don't be shy! You deserve good diabetes care.
 9. If you have diabetes, remember, "this is not your nana's diabetes." You can live a rich life of wellness and happiness and have diabetes.