

Caregiver Burnout

The constant demands of parenting a child with type 1 diabetes can sometimes be overwhelming. If the stress becomes unmanageable, it can take a toll on your health, relationships, and state of mind—eventually leading to burnout. And once you get to that point, it's difficult to take care of you or your child. So what can you do to prevent burnout or deal with it if you are already there?

Recognize the signs

Learning to recognize the signs of caregiver stress and burnout is the first step to dealing with the problem. Common signs of caregiver burnout include:

- Feeling helpless
- Emotional and physical exhaustion
- Difficulty sleeping
- Changes in appetite or weight
- Trouble concentrating
- Feeling resentful
- Neglecting your own needs
- Irritability, anxiety, and depression

Diabetes-Related Anxiety

It is not uncommon for caregivers to feel anxiety around diabetes management. Specifically, fear of hypoglycemia is a form of anxiety that arises around worries the person you care for may have a low blood glucose level. Try not to let this fear impact diabetes tasks, such as administering prescribed insulin doses. Try to be honest with your child's doctor if this is a concern for you; he/she can come up with a plan with your input to help alleviate this anxiety.

Tips with Dealing with Caregiver Stress

Don't become defined by your child's diagnosis and care - Being a caregiver is hard. Don't allow diabetes care to take over your life.

Set realistic goals: Perfect blood glucose goals are impossible, so don't set your child or yourself up for disappointment with unrealistic expectations. Focus on behaviors not numbers. Celebrate the small victories. Maybe that's celebrating when you estimated the carbohydrates correctly for a meal eating out.

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Take care of your health: It's difficult to take care of someone else if you are feeling run down or your own health is suffering. Make time for proper nutrition, exercise and sleep as they are essential for to have the energy and mental stamina to take care of your child.

Take a break: Find ways to pamper yourself or do things that you enjoy. Take a walk or step outside and breathe in fresh air. Meditation can help to remove stress and help you experience feelings of joy. Connect with friends you can talk and laugh with.

Share the responsibility: If the primary caregiving responsibilities lie with you, you can still delegate tasks to others, such as ordering supplies, grocery shopping or dealing with insurance.

Ask for help -You can find support groups through your local [JDRE](#) or through online forums such as [Children with Diabetes](#) or [Glu](#). Children with Diabetes also holds an annual conference, [Friends for Life](#), where you can connect with other families. If you feel you need to speak with a counselor, you can contact your doctor for a referral.

Recommended

[Diabetes Camps and Conferences](#)

[Diabetes and Your Marriage](#)

[Sources of Support](#)

Sources

[Diabetes Empowerment Foundation](#)

[Just for Parents - Diabetes Empowerment Foundation](#)

[Type 1 Diabetes Resources and Support - JDRE](#)

[Children with Diabetes](#)

[Caring for the Caregiver - ADA](#)

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[Families with children with diabetes: Implications of parent stress for parent and child health - PubMed](#)

[Influence of caregiver stress and coping on glycemic control of young children with diabetes - PubMed](#)

[Overcoming fear of hypoglycemia - Beyond Type 1](#)

[How to deal with hypoglycemia anxiety - A Sweet Life](#)

Reviewed by [Sarah Westen, PhD](#), 3/8/19

This document is not intended to take the place of the care and attention of your personal physician or other professional medical services. Our aim is to promote active participation in your care and treatment by providing information and education. Questions about individual health concerns or specific treatment options should be discussed with your physician.