



ADCES7 Self-Care Behaviors™

PROBLEM SOLVING

Problem solving is when you come up with ways to solve a problem, then try it and see if it works. When you have diabetes, you can follow your treatment plan, check your blood glucose (sugar) often and still find that you don't always get the results you hope for. Diabetes changes over time so you may need new ways to manage it. Using problem solving techniques can help.

Problems can be big or small, new or old, short-term or long-term, and everyone with diabetes faces them at some point. You can look ahead and plan for some but not others. There are 3 steps that make up the recipe for getting to the root of a problem and help you live well with diabetes:

STEP 1 - IDENTIFY THE PROBLEM

■ What has changed?

New medicines? Different food? New job? New work schedule? Change in family situation? New insurance plan?

■ What is going to change?

Traveling? Starting exercise? Long meeting scheduled? Holiday celebration?

You can develop a plan to prevent problems by knowing what is about to change. Sometimes an unexpected problem occurs that affects your diabetes. In that case, you must pin down the cause and try to solve it. It may not always be clear what will work. A diabetes care and education specialist can guide and support you through this. This takes you to step 2.

STEP 2 - FIND SOLUTIONS

- Think of ways to correct the problem based on your experience, tools and the support you have available.
- Check with your diabetes care and education specialist and healthcare provider to see if you have misunderstood anything about your treatment plan.

Here are some common situations where problem-solving may be needed:

Situation 1: Flu

You get the flu and notice your blood glucose levels are higher than normal.

What do you do?

Situation 2: Vacation

While on vacation, you don't have easy access to a gym or time for exercise. How will you handle this?

Situation 3: Traditional Foods

You have a hard time finding healthy food choices within your family's cultural or taste preferences. What steps can you take?

- Let them know if your life situation has changed. Work with them to help you decide what plan fits best for you.
- Share any issues you are experiencing, like not being able to afford all your diabetes supplies or medications.
- Ask them for ideas about new tools that could help.
- Having the right information can help you come up with the right solution for your problem. Then you move to step 3.

STEP 3 - TAKE ACTION

- Choose how to solve the problem once you have options.
- Set a realistic action plan.
- Pick a solution that you can handle; get help if you need it.
- Check to make sure your solution choice works.
- Try something different if one solution doesn't help.

When problem solving, be patient with yourself. Follow up with your diabetes care and education specialist to discuss how things went. They help others just like you every day to solve problems around taking medications, monitoring, healthy eating, being active and reducing risks. Ask your provider to refer you. You deserve it!"



Improve Your Problem-Solving Skills

When you succeed in solving problems you have identified, you gain confidence. You can better handle future challenging situations. Because things change over time, you will always need to do some problem solving to keep making progress. Learning from your previous choices and then revising your plans based on that information greatly enhances your ability for successful self-care.

To learn how a diabetes care and education specialist can help you, visit DiabetesEducator.org/LivingWithDiabetes.

For more on this and other behaviors for better diabetes management, visit DiabetesEducator.org/ADCES7.