



Taking Charge

Making the Best Decisions for Your Health

As a person with diabetes it is important that you are the one leading your team in making the best decisions for you and your health. Remember nobody knows your diabetes like you do.

Consider:

- At any given time with a chronic condition, such as diabetes, there will be a number of options and choices for treatment or possible paths to take.
- Often there are so many choices; it can be difficult to determine what the best option for you is.
- There are many grey areas when it comes to treatment options or health care choices, which can make decision-making difficult.
- In most cases there are no right or wrong answers, it comes down to making the best health decision for **you**.
- By working through the **5 standard questions** provided, you will gain more confidence to be actively involved in leading your diabetes team in making good choices for you and your diabetes management.

What are the 5 standard questions?

1. What will happen if I do nothing?
2. What are my options?
3. What are the advantages and disadvantages of the options?
4. How do the advantages and disadvantages weigh up for me?
5. Do I have enough information to make a choice?

What will happen if I do nothing?

As an example consider your A1c. What if the result was higher than expected or normal for you? Ask yourself “what will happen if I do nothing?”

- Maybe the A1c will continue to rise.
- Maybe the reason the A1c was high has already been solved (eg had the flu for a couple of weeks and have now recovered).
- What are the long term consequences of having a high A1c?
- Is this relevant to me and at this time?

What are the options?

To continue the example of your A1c... What if the result was higher than expected or normal for you? Ask yourself what are the options?

Maybe it is worth reviewing your lifestyle. Possibly there are one or two minor changes you could make to your eating and activity levels to improve your A1c

- Maybe there is a stressful situation that cannot be resolved in the short term; stress management may possibly benefit you.
- Revisit your insulin or medications, is it time for a change?



What are the Advantages and Disadvantages of the options?

(What? When? How long-lasting? How likely?)

To continue with the example of your A1c...
What if the result was higher than expected or normal for you? Ask yourself what? When? How long-lasting? How likely?

What changes (goal setting) if any can you make? How will you feel if you make changes with healthy eating and physical activity? How long will it take for the change to make a difference? Is it going to be of short or long term benefit or both to you? How likely is it to happen? If you are doubtful of it happening you need to consider your goal from two points of view.

1. Commitment; in order to achieve a change it is worth making a commitment to that change. The stronger the commitment the greater chance of success. Write it down, sign it and you may even ask one of your team to witness it.
2. Once you have made a commitment, ask yourself how confident you are in achieving that change. Think of the scale below, if your confidence in achieving your aim is less than 7 then the likelihood of achieving your goal is low. Maybe the change is too big and you may need to reconsider your goal and break it down into smaller steps. If your confidence is greater than 7 then you are very likely to achieve your goal.

1 _____ 7 _____ 10

- How will changes in insulin or medication doses affect me? Will I be at risk of side effects (e.g. Hypos)? Do I need to change my insulin or medication, if so what are the side effects and how will they affect me? Who in your team can you discuss this with?
- What are the risks of long term complications?

Do I have enough information to make a choice?

Do you have sufficient information on your current options? Is your range of options wide enough?

↓

NO

↓

Get the necessary

Information and return to the five questions to assess new information.

↓

YES

↓

Try the best option

Who is your team?

As team leader you choose your team. Your team can include your family and friends, GP, podiatrist, diabetes educator, dietitian, optometrist and pharmacist. All need to be able to work with you to achieve the best health decision for you.

Some tips to make the most of a visit to a health professional

Decide ahead of time what you want and need this visit to cover:

- Make a list of points you want covered.
- Make a list of questions that you want answered.
- Bring a list of all the current medications you are on, including complementary medications
- Bring a partner; two heads can be better than one.
- Be comfortable with your health professional; remember you are the team leader.

- If necessary take notes to review later
- Bring your blood glucose diary with you.

If you have a long list or they are many parts to the issue, make a long appointment so that your health professional has time to discuss things with you.

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