

## FAQ | CARE GIVERS

### 1. *Who can be a care giver?*

Anyone who knows or lives with or works with someone who has diabetes can be a care giver.

A parent takes care of a child, spouse may take care of their partner, colleagues may help take care of someone who works with them, friends may function as a health care buddy, parents and grandparents and in-laws are usually taken care of by the women of the house.

### 2. *What are the aspects of diabetes that a care giver should know?*

They should try to learn everything about diabetes and everything about the person they are caring for. Learning about the types of diabetes, treatment options, how to handle emergencies is important. Care givers should also learn a lot about motivating the person with diabetes to be positive and engaged in their health.

### 3. *What are the types of diabetes?*

There are three main types:

- ◆ **Type-1** is due to lack of insulin and typically affects young children/ adolescents and usually has a very sudden and rapid presentation and is not usually associated with a family history.
- ◆ **Type-2** is due to insulin resistance (and relative insulin insufficiency) and usually affects people over 40 years (though we are seeing more and more people of ages between 20-40), usually overweight and have a parent, sibling or grandparent with diabetes.
- ◆ **Gestational Diabetes Mellitus(GDM)** affects women who are pregnant and many of these women develop Type 2 diabetes within 5-10 years after the pregnancy.

### 4. *What are the usual medications for diabetes and what are their side effects?*

There are many types of diabetes medications. Some release insulin from the pancreas, some make our own insulin work better, some work by increasing the amount of glucose that go out in the urine and some by decreasing glucose release from the liver. It is important to know names, doses, side effects, alternative brand names, interactions with other medications, dosage adjustment when sick etc. Medications for blood pressure, cholesterol are also prescribed frequently.

### 5. *Are there do's and don't's regarding diet that the care giver should know?*

Diabetes care is all about healthy and timely eating and adequate physical activity for most people. Certain foods need to be avoided and some limited, while others included in moderation. There are also free foods. The most important aspect of nutrition is distribution of proteins, starch, vegetables, fruits, fats and portion control.

### 6. *What diabetic emergencies should the care giver know to handle?*

1. Diabetic ketoacidosis
2. Hypoglycaemia
3. Hyperglycaemia
4. Intercurrent sickness like fever, vomiting, diarrhea, respiratory or urinary tract infection.

### 7. *What about travelling with a diabetic?*

People now travel extensively for work, for pleasure, visiting family and for many other reasons. People are also travelling to exotic and far off destinations and are willing to be adventurous. Preparing for travel involves planning. A checklist for travel is available on [www.diwwaas.org](http://www.diwwaas.org)

### 8. *How can the care giver help the patient with diabetes remain positive?*

Diabetes can lead to frustration, depression and dejection in some people. This can be because of having to follow a diet, be on medications or having to undergo tests and treatments. Care givers can highlight the value of remaining engaged and positive without nagging or being harsh. This can be by sharing some information, or going to educational programs together or visiting the doctor together. It can also be through expression of love, attention and meeting patient champions and going to support groups.

### 9. *What can care givers do to help motivate their patients to better adhere to their treatment?*

Care givers should be supportive but not judgmental. They should be sensitive and show empathy. By gentle encouragement or sometimes being firm, patients can be helped to adhere to treatment. Care givers can also remind patients about their medications, help to maintain adequate supplies and help with home glucose monitoring, record keeping etc.

### 10. *Should care givers take care of themselves?*

Caregiver fatigue is common. This may be mental or physical fatigue. Caregivers must pay attention to their own health first to be able to care for others. Sometimes care giving places a lot of demand on time and energy. Please find someone to share your work or periodically find someone to take your place while you take a break and re-energize yourself. Eat healthy, be active, sleep well and see your physician for preventive health checks.