

SETTING GOALS, PROBLEM SOLVING, AND MANAGING STRESS

SETTING GOALS

You might set goals for yourself at home: "I'm going to clean my room so I can go out later." Or you might set them for school: "I'm going to study math for an hour tonight." Goals can help you take care of your diabetes too.

Goals help us stay on track. They can make us feel successful. Set goals that you can achieve and that will help you to feel good about yourself. Here are some tips:

- ▶ **Choose a goal that is important to you.** You'll be more motivated to work on it if it is important to you.
- ▶ **Make your goal challenging but realistic.** That way, you will feel successful when you achieve it. You can break a big goal into several smaller steps. Each step can be a separate goal.
- ▶ **Be specific in describing your goal.** Instead of "exercise more," you could try, "Walk 10 blocks every day after school."
- ▶ **Make sure you can measure your goal.** This will help you keep track of how you're doing and help you stay on track. You can count how many times you're doing something, how long you're doing it, or how much you do.
- ▶ **Tell someone else** (a parent, a friend, a teacher) about your goal so they can support you.
- ▶ **Reward yourself!** We all feel good when we get rewarded for doing something. When you reach your goal, reward yourself! Need some ideas on how to reward yourself? Ask your parent to help figure out a good reward for all the hard work you've been doing. Here are some ideas: Go to see a movie, buy a new book, go shopping with friends.

This chart can help you make a specific goal to work toward.

General goal:
Why this goal is important to me?
Why is it challenging but still a realistic goal?
How am I going to measure my progress?
Who I will tell so they can support me?
What will be the reward?

PROBLEM SOLVING

Sometimes you're going to have trouble reaching your goal. And other problems will come up that you have to solve. You already know about the STAR method. Let's see how it applies to goals.

The STAR method:

STOP: What is the problem or question?

THINK: What would be a possible answer?

ACT: Choose the best solution and try it!

REFLECT: How did it work? What happened?

Here's an example of how you can use STAR to solve a problem.

Let's say you are having four snacks a day. Your goal is to have only one snack a day. You are having trouble meeting this goal.

If you **STOP**, you will notice the problem. You have been eating 4 snacks each day. Going down to 1 snack per day is really hard for you.

THINK about it. You wonder if maybe you should start with a more realistic goal. Going from 4 snacks to 1 snack per day is a big jump. You're hungry, and this is hard!

ACT by deciding that you will make a more realistic goal. Two snacks a day is more realistic. When you feel more confident, then you can achieve this new goal.

After 1 week, you **REFLECT**. Notice that 5 out of 7 days, you had only 2 snacks. One day you had 3, but the other you had just one!

You have successfully problem solved and made a more realistic goal. Make sure you reward yourself!

MANAGING STRESS

Taking care of your diabetes can affect different parts of your life. It can be stressful. Remember there are people who love you and want to help. Sometimes you just need to ask.

Ask for Help

Get support from others. Ask your mom, dad, sibling, or other family member to help you by making sure you have all the supplies you need.

At school, you could help the rest of your class learn about diabetes. They will know more about what you're going through and what you're doing about it. You could also ask a friend to help you with your diabetes. A friend could make sure you're doing OK with your diabetes at parties or other events.

Federal laws protect people with diabetes. You have the right to take care of your diabetes at school. If you feel like you are being treated unfairly at school because of your diabetes, call 1-800-DIABETES or visit diabetes.org/safeatschool to learn more.

Be Proud of Who You Are

We often see ourselves as we think others see us. Maybe you think you are too short or too tall. Maybe you think your hair is too straight or too curly. Maybe you are concerned about your weight. All of these things relate to self-esteem or how good you feel about YOU. By now, you probably have some feelings about having diabetes. Ask for the support you need. Take care of your stress so diabetes does not make you feel less like yourself. You can have diabetes and feel good about yourself!

