

# 01

**DON'T offer unsolicited advice about my eating or other aspects of diabetes.**

You may mean well, but giving advice about someone's personal habits, especially when it is not requested, isn't very nice. Besides, many of the popularly held beliefs about diabetes ("you should just stop eating sugar") are out of date or just plain wrong.

# 02

**DO realize and appreciate that diabetes is hard work.**

Diabetes management is a full-time job that I didn't apply for, didn't want and can't quit. It involves thinking about what, when, and how much I eat, while also factoring in exercise, medication, stress, blood sugar monitoring, and so much more – each and every day.

# 03

**DON'T tell me horror stories about your grandmother or other people with diabetes you have heard about.**

Diabetes is scary enough, and stories like these are not reassuring! Besides, we now know that with good management, odds are good you can live a long, healthy, and happy life with diabetes.

# 04

**DO offer to join me in making healthy lifestyle changes.**

Not having to be alone with efforts to change, like starting an exercise program, is one of the most powerful ways that you can be helpful. After all, healthy lifestyle changes can benefit everyone!

# 05

**DON'T look so horrified when I check my blood sugars or give myself an injection.**

It is not a lot of fun for me either. Checking blood sugars and taking medications are things I must do to manage diabetes well. If I have to hide while I do so, it makes it much harder for me.

# 06

**DO ask how you might be helpful.**

If you want to be supportive, there may be lots of little things I would probably appreciate your help with. However, what I really need may be very different than what you think I need, so please ask first.

# 07

**DON'T offer thoughtless reassurances.**

When you first learn about my diabetes, you may want to reassure me by saying things like, "Hey it could be worse." The implicit message seems to be that diabetes is no big deal. However, diabetes IS a big deal.

# 08

**DO be supportive of my efforts for self-care.**

Help me set up an environment for success by supporting healthy food choices. Please honor my decision to decline a particular food, even when you really want me to try it. You are most helpful when you are not being a source of unnecessary temptation.

# 09

**DON'T peek at or comment on my blood glucose numbers without asking me first.**

These numbers are private unless I choose to share them. It is normal to have numbers that are sometimes too low or too high. Your unsolicited comments about these numbers can add to the disappointment, frustration and anger I already feel.

# 10

**DO offer your love and encouragement.**

As I work hard to manage diabetes successfully, sometimes just knowing that you care can be very helpful and motivating.



This leaflet is provided as a service to patients and carers, as supported by Novo Nordisk Pharmaceuticals. Diabetes Etiquette is developed by the Behavioral Diabetes Institute, USA. To learn more about diabetes, consult your healthcare professional.



**BEHAVIORAL  
DIABETES  
INSTITUTE**

P.O. Box 501866 • San Diego, CA 92150  
858-336-8693 • 760-942-5780 fax • [www.behavioraldiabetes.org](http://www.behavioraldiabetes.org)  
© 2009 Behavioral Diabetes Institute.  
All Rights Reserved.

# diabetes etiquette

for people who  
**DON'T** have diabetes



**BEHAVIORAL  
DIABETES  
INSTITUTE**