

## DIABETES IN CHILDREN AND YOUTH

### FOR THE NEWLY DIAGNOSED FAMILY

When a child or youth is diagnosed with diabetes, it triggers a variety of changes in the family. Family routines and roles change, finances might be stretched, and family members deal with a list of new concerns. The time following diagnosis can be stressful.

Some emotions you feel while adjusting to life with diabetes are similar to those felt during the grieving process. You might feel all or only some of these emotions. They may change from day to day or you might feel one of them more intensely. It is important to remember that there is a wide range of normal coping and each family member will react differently. Your Diabetes Team is able to provide support during this time if needed.

#### What might you feel?

- **Shock:**
  - When the doctor tells you that you/your child has diabetes, it might feel like you are in a dream or viewing the situation as an outsider. You might feel surprised or numb.
- **Sadness:**
  - You might feel sad that you/your child has diabetes. Some people express sadness by crying. Some people miss the way life “used to be.”
- **Fear and anxiety:**
  - You might worry that you won’t learn everything you need to know, be scared of needles, or the impact diabetes will have on the family.
- **Anger and resentment:**
  - You might ask “Why me?” or feel like it’s “Not fair.” You may feel resentful about the extra responsibility; siblings might be jealous about the extra attention you are receiving.
- **Guilt:**
  - You might feel like the diagnosis is your fault or feel guilty about your feelings about the diagnosis.
- **Acceptance:**
  - With diabetes, acceptance should be thought of as an ongoing process rather than a final destination. Children and families are constantly developing and changing. Your feelings about diabetes will change too, and this is ok.