

# COPING

## How do you know when you are stressed?

- My muscles get tense, particularly in my lower back, neck, jaw and shoulders
- I get a headache and/or stomachache
- I get irritable with my family, co-workers and friends
- I feel completely worn out and drained



Our body is amazing; it gets us ready to handle events we think are challenging by sending hormonal messages that instruct it to get ready to meet the demands. This is the self-contained system we call the fight/flight/freeze response and it is intended to help cope with stressful situations. It gives us extra energy and the ability to focus so we can respond appropriately.

## Is stress a bigger deal with diabetes?

As the body's system prepares us to manage stress, it also releases the hormone glucagon, which causes your blood sugar to increase. People with diabetes rely on medication or other methods to decrease blood sugar levels.

## There are positive ways to manage our stress.

Some examples are:

- Exercise
- Meditation or deep breathing
- Taking a walk outside
- Talking with a supportive friend, co-worker or family member
- Listening to music
- Taking a break

Stress is a significant part of life. By accepting this, we know we need to have ways of dealing with it that serve us and help us live well. Diabetes is a stressful part of your life, but you can find positive ways to manage it.