

# Involving Patients in Making Decisions About Diabetes Care

Healthcare providers—and their patients—have multiple options to consider when managing diabetes. While some patients may say they want their providers to make some choices for them, **patient participation in decision-making has been associated with:**

- **Better health outcomes<sup>1-3</sup>**
- **Improved adherence<sup>4\*</sup>**
- **Higher levels of satisfaction with care<sup>1-3</sup>**

**Shared decision-making** is a process by which a healthcare choice is made jointly by the provider and the patient.<sup>1</sup> Many providers find shared decision-making helpful because it can bridge the gap between patient-centered care and evidence-based medicine.<sup>1</sup>

For diabetes, the main management options are diet, exercise, and medication. Talk with your patients about their preferences in these areas.

## Essential Elements of Shared Decision-Making<sup>5</sup>

Working together, the patient and provider should:

- Explain the problem that needs to be addressed
- Review options, and discuss the pros and cons
- Make a joint decision that takes into account both the provider's recommendations and the patient's values and preferences

## Suggestions for Implementing Shared Decision-Making for Diabetes Care

- Ensure that patients are sufficiently informed about key issues before making a decision<sup>6</sup>
  - Explain that different people may have different views about what matters most<sup>6</sup>
- Elicit and/or clarify the patient's values and preferences<sup>3</sup>
  - You may need to ask specific questions. For example:
    - “What types of exercise or physical activities do you enjoy?”
    - “How do you plan meals during a typical week? How often do you: Cook? Eat out? Order takeout?”
    - “Tell me what you know and how you feel about the different forms of diabetes medicines.”
- Look for ways to incorporate shared decision-making into your daily practice
  - When time is short, consider whether another provider (nurse, nutritionist, physical therapist, pharmacist, etc.) can help the patient understand his or her options<sup>3</sup>

## Use shared decision-making to increase patient involvement in their diabetes care.

\* Among patients with diabetes taking antidepressant medications.

**References:** 1. Légaré F, Turcotte S, Stacey D, Ratté S, Kryworuchko J, Graham ID. Patients' perceptions of sharing in decisions: a systematic review of interventions to enhance shared decision making in routine clinical practice. *Patient*. 2012;5(1):1-19. 2. Dy SM, Purnell TS. Key concepts relevant to quality of complex and shared decision-making in health care: a literature review. *Soc Sci Med*. 2012;74(4):582-587. 3. Légaré F, Witteman HO. Shared decision making: examining key elements and barriers to adoption into routine clinical practice. *Health Aff (Millwood)*. 2013;32(2):276-284. 4. Bauer AM, Parker MM, Schillinger D, et al. Associations between antidepressant adherence and shared decision-making, patient-provider trust, and communication among adults with diabetes: Diabetes Study of Northern California (DISTANCE). *J Gen Intern Med*. 2014;29(8):1139-1147. doi: 10.1007/s11606-014-2845-6. 5. Makoul G, Clayman ML. An integrative model of shared decision making in medical encounters. *Patient Educ Couns*. 2006;60:301-312. 6. Elwyn G, Frosch D, Thomson R, et al. Shared decision making: a model for clinical practice. *J Gen Intern Med*. 2012;27(10):1361-1367.