

MANAGING SOCIAL SITUATIONS

while living with diabetes

THE “FOOD POLICE” CAN BE EVERYWHERE!

- These seemingly well-meaning people can either question your every move when it comes to food choices: “should you be eating that?” or encourage you to eat what you like as it “won’t hurt you just this once”!

Peer pressure:

- It appears that everyone has a friend, relative or work colleague who tries to persuade them to eat or drink foods they don’t want to excessively. This can make things difficult but there are a few things you could do:

If.....	You could....	My Past Experiences and/or Future Plan
... someone who is unaware that you have diabetes continues to pressure you about food in a social situation,	...consider telling them. If you tell them, be prepared to answer some questions they might have. Some people find social situations easier when others know about their diabetes.	
... the person does know and they keep behaving in this way,	...consider taking the time to explain a little more about diabetes and the way you choose to manage it. It’s most likely because they don’t understand what ‘having diabetes’ actually means. Try to remember that people act this way largely because they simply don’t understand or don’t know how to respond.	
... you don’t want to tell people that you have diabetes,	...compromise or say no politely. For example, if you’re being pushed into having a cake that you don’t want, you could try saying “It looks great but I’m already full, can I please have a small piece?” or take the piece given and have a little. If you do decide to stick to your guns and say ‘no’, try to keep it short, decisive and positive. Knowing how to say ‘no’ is a useful skill to have in all aspects of life.	

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Food police:

- On the other end of the spectrum are the well-meaning do-gooders who know that you have diabetes and have made your dietary habits their business. Even more unfortunate is the fact that they never seem to get their facts straight. Here are some things you could try:

If.....	You could....	My Past Experiences and/or Future Plan
...you encounter people policing your food options,	...try to summon the patience to explain the matter calmly and put their concerns to rest. Try not to be too hard on yourself and on other people. Keep in mind that these comments are usually a result of both ignorance and good intentions.	
...they say something like, "Should you be eating jam? It's full of sugar,"	...respond with, "Don't worry, I've spoken to my dietitian and she mentioned that strawberry jam actually has a low glycemic index. It's okay for me to have some on my toast". OR ...tell them that we know a lot more about diabetes now and sugar does not have to be left out of the diet of a person with diabetes. You could offer to give them some information about this if they are interested to learn more.	

- We cannot control what other people say and think but by responding appropriately, we can avoid a lot of negative emotions.