

**Living Well With Diabetes,
Featuring Elaine Aubin, RS, BSN, CDE, Manchester VAMC**

**Brought to you by the NH Department of Health and Human Services,
Division of Public Health Services**

Elaine Aubin: Elaine Aubin is my name, I'm an RN (Registered Nurse) and I'm a CDE (Certified Diabetes Educator). I've had my diabetes educator certificate for 10 years now, maybe a little bit more, and I've done diabetes education for about 15 years because you know it takes 1,000 hours of working with diabetes specifically before you can even sit for the exam.

It's All About You

Elaine Aubin: My approach is to really work with the patient-start with where they are. So you have to find out where they are and what they're ready to do. So that's my approach and it always has been. Even when I see patients who come for the pre-class assessment, sometimes they come in and they don't want to come to (diabetes education) class. They're angry (and say) "why did my provider send me here?" So I tell them look, I've got an hour and it's yours, what can I help you with. And, often times, by the end of our appointment, they decide they do want to come to class because maybe there's things they could learn.

Supporting You

Elaine Aubin: So, that's one of the biggies that I get from most people and what we try to emphasize is that there is no special diabetes diet, that it's the way we all should eat to be healthy. You know, it's all food groups in moderation and we talk to people about how they can work in their treats, and that's there's no food that's off limits. We call them "blue moon foods" (as in, "once in a blue moon"). You know, because what do you want more than the things someone tells you that you can't have?

The Emotional Aspect of Diabetes

Elaine Aubin: Especially when I'm meeting someone who is newly diagnosed, I ask them how that feels. Kind of a real slap in the face isn't it? Really, I look at any diagnosis of a chronic illness as a grief process because you've lost at least your perception of health. So, I think you really need to address that and let people know that's a normal reaction and the more you know about your disease the more "in control" you are and you feel better about your life and your being able to manage it.

Helping You Feel in Control

Elaine Aubin: It's always so great when you see people coming back to (diabetes education) class after a few weeks, you know we have four weeks, and say "I've done this, I've changed my breakfast," or whatever and, "look at my blood sugars." They love it, they bring their (blood sugar) logs to class or they call me and say how well they're doing. Yes, I think it really does help them feel like they're in control. Some people aren't ready, and all you can do is let them know you're going to be around when they are! You're not here to please me; I'm here to help you. The other thing that sometimes surprises them is (I tell them) "this is your visit." Then they go, "no it's not, it's your appointment," and I say, "nope, it's yours and we're here to work (with) and help you.