



Finding online support for managing your diabetes

MAGNACARESM
May 2023

Social media helps us stay in touch with friends, learn the news, be entertained—and find community. All of which is why, in the U.S. alone, **302 million people use social media for an average total of two hours and 35 minutes every day.**



For people with diabetes, especially since the COVID-19 pandemic interfered with in-person social networks, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Twitter and other online sites can provide an invaluable 24/7 connection to peer support and shared information

While social media is a phenomenal tool for sharing information, decisions about your health should always be made in consultation with your healthcare provider.

Exploring the Diabetes Online Community

A 2021 study published by the scientific journal Springer shows “a beneficial impact of social support on diabetes self-management,” even including a lowering of blood glucose levels. While non-diabetic family members and friends can be an important source of support, sometimes one person with diabetes needs to talk to another who is actually living with the condition.

What is known as the “Diabetes Online Community” (DOC) can help you:

Ask questions. According to a new study, two-thirds (66%) of people forget to ask the questions they’d meant to ask during medical appointments. While people can and should ask their health care providers for information, sometimes they forget or feel overwhelmed during visits. Online, none of that applies, so you can ask away!

Manage daily living with diabetes, including meal planning, finding new ways to monitor blood sugar levels and getting specific feedback on avoiding complications in terms of other health issues associated with diabetes. Online support groups can also be a good way to link to the newest scientific research and treatment options for diabetes.

Adjust to life with diabetes. Since people with diabetes can be prone to depression and anxiety, social media is a good place to go to find how others cope. When the popular British online forum Team Diabetes 101 posted on Twitter: “Why do people with diabetes have more self-critical thoughts?” the responses flooded in from people worrying others were judging them based on their blood glucose numbers and those who feared that their diabetes made them too “different” to fully connect with others.

Getting Connected Online

The DOC is available just a click or two away across a wide range of online channels. These channels cover a wide range, including the Facebook and Twitter sites of government-sponsored entities like Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and the National Institute of Health (NIH), respected nonprofits the American Diabetes Association (ADA) and sites run by corporations, medical practitioners and individuals with diabetes.



Facebook has numerous diabetes support groups where people post and comment on the posts of others. **Just to name a few:**

Diabetes 101 For Beginners (98.3k members)

Created for those newly diagnosed with type 2 diabetes as safe space where they can ask questions.

Diabetes Support Group (47k members)

A group for people with type 1 and type 2 diabetes, as well as parents and caregivers.

Living Health with Diabetes (33.4k members)

A group of people with diabetes promoting healthy eating recipes.



Twitter features dozens of diabetes related posts—try searching **#type2diabetes** or **#diabetes**



Instagram Yes, even diabetes has social media "influencers" **Just to name a few:**

@thehangrywoman Describes Mila Clark's life with type 2 diabetes, with a focus on healthy recipes.

@doctordeabeatit Features stories of living with type 1 diabetes from a family medicine physician and mom.

@diabetesresearch Updates on the search for a cure to diabetes from the nonprofit Diabetes Research Institute.

Online forums and blogs date almost from the inception of the internet but are incredibly valuable when it comes to answering questions and providing highly personal perspectives for and by those with diabetes.



Online Forums

Beyond Type 1 Community A place to talk about type 1 diabetes with "people who understand the nuances of life with diabetes."

Beyond Type 2 Community Created in partnership with Beyond Type 1 and the American Diabetes Association, this forum is about "everything related to the daily management" of diabetes. (Beyond Type 2 is also available in Spanish.)

Diabetes Daily A collection of forums for people with type 1 and type 2 diabetes.



Blogs

Scott's Diabetes Written by a speaker, writer and advocate who has lived with type 1 diabetes for over 40 years.

Diagnosed But Not Defeated Founded by writer Phylissa Deroze after she was diagnosed with type 2 diabetes.

Diabetes Stories Focuses on topics like current diabetes research and personal anecdotes, often told with cutting humor by blogger Riva Greenberg.

But wait... There's so much diabetes information out there on social media, who can you trust? In general, the same rules of caution apply in this area of the internet as in others. Beware of someone offering a miracle cure. People trying to sell you something should be viewed with a grain of salt—though it is not absolutely disqualifying, since reputable companies often provide valuable information even as they sell glucose monitoring devices. Never give out personal information, especially financial information, to people online. Ultimately you have to follow your own experience and instincts. When in doubt, consult your doctor about health information you discover via social media.

Sources: <https://www.fiercehealthcare.com/providers/many-patients-exit-visits-physicians-unanswered-questions-survey> | <https://www.everydayhealth.com/hs/type-2-diabetes-care/diabetes-apps/> | <https://www.cnn.com/2022/12/29/health/diabetes-young-people/index.html> | <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/19322968211054862> | <https://diatribe.org/11-ways-connect-people-diabetes-online> | <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC8156131/> | <https://www.physiciansweekly.com/diabetes-social-media/> | <https://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/library/socialmedia/index.html> | <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7210496/> | <https://bmcpmcare.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12875-022-01846-0> | https://www.woundsasia.com/uploads/resources/dotn/_master/3630/files/pdf/jdn18-2-68-71.pdf | [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/landia/article/PIIS2213-8587\(22\)00318-7/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/landia/article/PIIS2213-8587(22)00318-7/fulltext) | <https://www.diabeticwarehouse.org/blogs/articles/top-10-diabetes-influencers-you-should-follow-on-instagram>

The information set forth herein is for informational purposes only and is not intended as medical or legal advice or a substitute for a consultation with a qualified healthcare provider or attorney. Any links set forth herein are for convenience only and inclusion of same does not imply endorsement by Brighton Health Plan Solutions, LLC or its affiliates ("Brighton"). Additionally, links are not under Brighton's control and therefore Brighton is not responsible for the contents of such linked sites. Brighton shall not be liable for any adverse events that may occur from your use of, or reliance on, the information set forth herein, which use and reliance is solely at your own risk.