Title: My mother's journey with diabetes

My mother was diagnosed with type 2 diabetes in her early 50s.

She was generally a cheerful person, but she'd been feeling sluggish, fatigued and irritated. She also needed to urinate frequently and was embarrassed to go out.

These symptoms, and her abrupt lack of interest in ordinary matters, concerned her and my father. So they went to see a doctor, who confirmed she was a diabetic through a blood test and urine sample.

The doctor advised her to take regular medicine, avoid sugary food and drink lots of water (she also had kidney stones). He also advised her to go for walks every morning as it would help control her blood sugar level.

My family has a history of diabetes on my mother's side, so we already knew some of the precautions. However, despite knowing that you could still lead a healthy life even after a diagnosis of sugar, in the beginning my mother felt hopeless and feared for her life – She also knew the potential consequences if she didn't manage her diabetes properly.

She was determined to avoid serious complications and health issues. So she made a plan to manage her blood sugar level using a combination of doctor-prescribed medicine, a healthier diet, and a few tried-and-true home remedies.

Changing our family's eating habits

For most diabetics, your meals should spread out regularly throughout the day. You should have breakfast within an hour and a half of waking up, eat a meal every 4-5 hours after that, and snack between meals if you get hungry.

In my family, we traditionally ate our meals together. But when my siblings and I started going to university and had different class timings, catching up with us and sharing a meal became more difficult.

My mother used to wait for everybody in the house to wake up so we could have breakfast together. Waiting was hard for her because after a while she would start to feel low.

Our solution was to have at least dinner together, but for all other meals, anyone could eat whenever they liked. For breakfast, we told my mother she should eat even if she was the only one awake.

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Cutting out sugar

Sugar causes a dramatic rise in blood sugar levels after consumption, and a diabetic should avoid it at all costs.

Getting my mother off processed sugar was a real challenge. She was willing to give up desserts, but she had to have two spoons of sugar with her tea after every meal.

At first, we tried to persuade her to cut down on her tea consumption or stop adding sugar to it. But she was adamant about continuing to drink tea, and she wouldn't even consider switching to sugar-free. She tried to decrease the sugar to just a half teaspoon of sugar in each cup but quickly realised it wasn't enough.

In the end, stevia (a natural sweetener) came to her aid. When my sister married her German husband, they went to Germany for a trip. While there, they bought my mother multivitamins and stevia. We'd never heard of stevia before, but my mother tried it and found it a perfect replacement for the sugar in her tea. Now she can drink sweet tea without any trouble at all.

Bringing aloe vera into the home

We decided to bring an aloe vera plant into our house after learning that it has soothing effects on inflammation and can help control blood sugar levels. My mother picks a leaf and stores it in the fridge. She then takes a spoonful of gel from the leaf and swallows it with a glass of water (to counter the bitter taste).

Eating ginger regularly

Like aloe vera, ginger can also aid in the management of blood sugar levels. My mother takes a half-inch of ginger and a cup of water and brings it to a boil in a saucepan. She then reduces it to low heat and lets it sit for 5 minutes before straining it. She eats this once or twice a day.

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Tackling the side effects of diabetes

Diabetes often presents with other complications and health issues. For my mother, it came with kidney stones.

However, following a healthy diet and drinking plenty of water helped her tackle this problem. Drinking lots of water helps her manage both her kidney and blood sugar issues and avoid renal discomfort.

Final thought

Diabetes is a serious disease, and the consequences can be scary. But diabetics of any age can live a healthy life, just like my mother – You just need to take your medicine regularly, follow a balanced diet, and maintain a positive attitude.

Author Bio:

Ifra Baig is the daughter of a type 2 diabetic. She's seen first-hand the challenges that living with diabetes can bring, but firmly believes they can be overcome with simple, step-by-step lifestyle alterations.

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