

# It's OK not to be OK

Diabetes can put a burden on mental well-being. Find out more about what these struggles can look like and how to spot the signs and symptoms.



## Distress

Diabetes distress can arise from the daily stress of managing the condition. Trying to keep it in check can be overwhelming and make diabetes worse, potentially leading to diabetes burnout over time.

<https://www.diabetes.org.uk/guide-to-diabetes/emotions/diabetes-burnout>



## Anxiety

Intense worry can lead to anxiety disorder. Common signs to look out for are uncontrolled nervousness and concerns, trembling, muscle tension, irritability and panic attacks.

<https://www.diabetes.org.uk/professionals/resources/shared-practice/psychological-care/emotional-health-professionals-guide/chapter-7-anxiety>



## Depression

People with diabetes experiencing persistent symptoms of restlessness, over- or undereating, headaches, and/or feelings of worthlessness for more than two weeks may be suffering from depression and should seek medical help.

<https://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/managing/mental-health.html>



## Eating disorders: diabulimia

This complication, mainly associated with type 1 diabetes, refers to the underuse or restriction of insulin with the aim of losing weight, although it can also include other behaviours such as body image anxiety, strict food rules and excessive exercise.

<https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/diseases/22658-diabulimia>

Many diabetes-related struggles start off similarly with the symptoms listed below\*:

- Strong negative feelings about diabetes
- Changes in sleep patterns
- Pronounced mood swings
- Irritability
- Discomfort testing/injecting



\* <https://www.mhanational.org/diabetes-and-mental-health>  
<https://www.diabetes.org.uk/guide-to-diabetes/emotions/depression>  
<https://www.diabetes.org.uk/professionals/resources/shared-practice/psychological-care/emotional-health-professionals-guide/chapter-3-diabetes-distress>

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## Burnout

Diabetes burnout is often described as a feeling of hopelessness or resignation that can lead to skipping insulin doses, refusing to take medication, avoiding check-ups and ignoring the annoying but essential elements of daily care.