

Introduction: At each follow-up visit the D2d study will provide you with a handout on the lifestyle changes you can make to reduce your risk for diabetes. Research shows that losing 5% to 7% of your body weight (about 10 to 14 pounds for a 200-pound person) and getting at least 150 minutes each week of physical activity can help you prevent or delay type 2 diabetes. We hope you find the information in these handouts helpful.

Taking Charge and Problem Solving

Part 1: Take Charge of What's Around You

Understanding Cues

We often eat or drink because something triggers our desire for food. These triggers are called *cues*. Food cues affect how much we eat, and activity cues affect how much we move. Some cues are positive and lead to a healthy behavior. Other cues are a problem and lead us to overeat or be less active.

Taking Charge

When we respond to a cue in the same way over and over again, we build a habit. When faced with the cue, we respond without thinking. Once a habit forms, it becomes hard to break. Changing behavior requires us to take control and stay in control.

Change Can Happen!

Cues are all around us, and often we are unaware of how strong they are. You can learn to take charge of those cues, so that they can help you rather than stand in the way of meeting your goals. Remember it takes time to break old habits and build new, healthier ones. Change does not happen overnight.

What Makes Us Eat?

Each one of us responds to different cues – here are a few common ones:

- ❖ Hunger
- ❖ What we are thinking or feeling
- ❖ What other people say or do
- ❖ Sight and smell of food
- ❖ Availability of food in social settings
- ❖ Certain activities such as watching TV or seeing pictures of food in a magazine

- ❖ Think about your own life and try to identify the various cues that influence when *you* eat. How many of these cues are independent of hunger?



Changing Food Cues and Habits

Food cues are not always bad. But they can be a problem if they get in the way of our efforts to eat a healthy diet. Here are some ideas for changing food cues:

- ✓ Stay away from negative cues, or keep them out of sight
 - Keep high-calorie foods out of your house and work place
 - Out of sight is out of mind!
- ✓ Build a new, healthier habit
 - Practice *reacting* to the cue in a healthier way
 - Add a new cue that helps you lead a healthier life
- ✓ Keep low-calorie choices easy to reach, in sight, and ready to eat
- ✓ Limit your eating to one place (for example, the kitchen table)
- ✓ When you eat, do not do anything else (for example, do not eat while watching TV, reading the newspaper, or working on the computer)
 - This allows you to eat *mindfully* – that is, to be more aware of what you are eating, how much you are eating, and how fast you are eating

Changing Activity Cues and Habits

Similarly, to be active regularly, we need to add positive activity cues to our lives and get rid of the negative ones:

- ✓ Keep exercise gear (shoes, gym bag, mat, bike) where you can see it most of the time
- ✓ Keep a calendar of planned activities
- ✓ Set up a regular activity date with a friend or family member
- ✓ Have other visual reminders and motivators at home
 - Fitness videos and magazines
 - Photos and posters of the outdoors or people being active
- ✓ Reduce TV watching, or be active while you watch TV



Part 2: Problem Solving

Sometimes we may run into problems when we try to change our habits. **Here are five steps we can take to solve those problems:**

1. Describe the problem
2. List all of your options
3. Pick what seems to be the best option, and try it
4. Make a plan for putting the option into effect
5. Follow the plan



Why do these steps work for problem solving? Following these steps helps us to be more in control of unexpected setbacks. They also force us to be detailed in our search for solutions. Describing the problem helps us see what we are truly dealing with; we can then break down the problem into small pieces that we can manage.

Step 1: Describe the Problem in Detail

- ✓ Be specific
- ✓ Look at what led to the problem
- ✓ Find the action (or behavior) chain
- ✓ Try to see the links in the action chain. Look for:
 - Cues that make you want to eat or be inactive
 - People who do not support you
 - Thoughts or feelings that get in your way

Example: Sarah's Action Chain

1. Did not eat lunch
2. Boss was angry
3. Felt stressed and anxious
4. Came home tired, upset, & hungry
5. Went right to the kitchen
6. Saw cookies on counter
7. Ate cookies

Step 2: Brainstorm Your Options

Think of all the options you have for overcoming the cues you listed in Step 1. Pair them with each event in the action chain that led to the problem:

Events (Links) in Sarah's Action Chain	Some of Sarah's Options
Did not eat lunch.	Pack a bag lunch.
Boss was angry.	Talk with boss about solving problems at work.
Sara felt stressed and anxious.	Quit job. (Just kidding, but not really.) Take a break. Get support from a co-worker.
Came home tired, upset, and hungry.	Go for a walk after work to unwind. Eat a healthy snack.
Went right to the kitchen.	Enter house through different door. Plan something to do immediately after arriving home. (For example, go out in the yard, clean a closet.)
Saw cookies on counter.	Do not buy cookies. If other family members have cookies, keep them out of sight. Keep fruit in sight.

Step 3: Pick One Option to Try

- ✓ Weigh the pros and cons of each option
- ✓ Choose one that is likely to work and that you can do.
- ✓ Try to break as many links as you can, as soon as possible.

Sarah's example

- ✓ It will be much easier for me to control my eating in the evening if I eat lunch and do not come home hungry
- ✓ I can avoid the cookies if I do not buy them in the first place
- ✓ Even if I eat lunch, I may still come home hungry. If I do not buy the cookies, it will be easier to choose low-calorie snacks such as fruit when I get home.

Step 4: Make a Positive Action Plan

Your plan should include each action you will take to make a change in your eating cues. Here are the actions Sarah will take:

- ✓ I will... Pack a bag lunch
- ✓ When? Tuesday and Thursday of next week
- ✓ I will do this first... Shop for food and pack lunch the night before
- ✓ Roadblocks I might forget to pack or bring the lunch. If so,
 - I'll find a healthy lunch place with quick service
 - I'll order a turkey sandwich for delivery
- ✓ I will do this to make my success more likely... Ask a friend who brings bag lunches to work to join me for lunch on Tuesday

Step 5: Try It!

Try your plan. Afterwards ask yourself these questions:

1. Did it work?
2. If not, what went wrong?
3. What can I do next time to make this plan work better?
4. What other plan can I try if this one will not work?



Problem solving is a *process*. If your plan does not work, then try each step again. Look closely at the events that led to the problem, and try to find other options that will solve your problem.

Remember: Do not give up!