

Mishti Copes with diabetes: Yoga

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ABSTRACT

Type I diabetes is a lifelong disorder and its diagnosis usually comes as a shock not only for the child but for the whole family. It has a huge psychosocial impact as children with diabetes face discrimination and sometimes also limited social relationships. This stress and shock not only has ill effect on overall health but all disturbs daily routine and discipline which is essential for managing diabetes. Yoga is a traditional Indian practice which is not only a great way to relax and unwind, but also to get fit. It provides discipline, physical strength, flexibility and also emotional wellbeing and thus helps in coping with diabetes.

Key words: Children, stress, type I diabetes, yoga

I am Mishti, and I live with diabetes since I was 11. Living with diabetes has taught me many things that make me a healthy, disciplined, and self-reliant personality. I take insulin regularly, take a healthy balanced diet, play a sport regularly, and also monitor my blood sugar levels 2–3 times daily.

I was not always like this. In my part of the country, it is difficult for the society to accept a girl with diabetes due to various reasons that whether they are medical expenses, access to regular exercise, sports, and games or having daily fruits and vegetables and even marriage. My parents have been very supportive throughout and have happily done everything for me. However, the world is not the same whenever society and relatives gave weird suggestions. I used to pity myself. I used to get angry on every little thing and used to carry the same mood for hours as if there is no life or a tomorrow. My health care team (Doctors and Educators from CDIC center) have counseled me many

times that any kind of stress increases blood sugar levels and is bad for health.^[1] This stress created a very big problem for my family and me and disturbed my daily routine and discipline which is essential for managing diabetes.

FINDING A BALANCE

To cope with this challenge, my parents, my health care team, and I were determined but could not find a way out. Then, my best friend's mother suggested that I should join yoga as it has helped my friend who used to get upset very easily. My mother and I joined the yoga classes. Here, we found a way of relaxation which was socially acceptable and enjoyable, also a great method of providing physical strength and flexibility. Yoga is effective, safe, and can easily be integrated into daily routine. It has helped me improve not only my social and emotional well-being but also physical strength and flexibility.^[2]

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It also helped my mother regain her lost health. This made me happy as I always felt guilty in my mind that my diabetes had burdened my parents and they were looking much older in just a few months.

YOGA

Yoga is a great way not only to relax and unwind but also to get fit. Yoga is a traditional Indian practice that includes breathing exercises and asanas.^[3] The soothing postures and meditation have helped me in increasing my flexibility, balance, strength, and thus sense of well-being. I started yoga in yoga classes run by a nongovernmental organization. They provided me yoga mat and taught me breathing exercises which I had to do in the beginning for 10 min; then, I will do some asanas and end the session by relaxation breathing techniques. Now, I do yoga at home and go to yoga center only on Saturdays.

PRECAUTIONS

While doing yoga, I make sure to wear comfortable and loose clothes. I also check my glucose levels, if possible, and take small snack if my sugar levels are <120 mg/dl. For some time, I left my walk when I was doing yoga; this resulted in high blood sugar levels. Then, my doctor uncle told me that if I need to replace walk, and then I need to do complete set of asanas which includes *Surya namaskara* along with other breathing and relaxation exercises. It is always good if I can play in open in addition to my yoga

routine. Now, I play badminton or go for walk in addition to yoga.

My yoga mates and teacher are aware that I have diabetes and they need to give me sweets if I feel giddy. I eat nutritious diet which includes lots of green leafy vegetables, fruits, and sprouts daily.

CONCLUSION

I cope with diabetes by yoga. I feel that it has helped my parents and me both in accepting diabetes and living a healthy life. What do you feel? How do you cope with diabetes: Please let us know.

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Conflicts of interest

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