

# PREFACE

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## *Educating Your Patient with Diabetes*

Those who provide diabetes education have a most important goal to support people as they struggle to normalize their lives with diabetes. Educators strive to help the person become an independent practitioner of diabetes, someone who can take advantage of community resources, make healthy lifestyle choices, and follow treatment recommendations and prescriptions. Of course, in reality, this dream is much too difficult for one person to achieve alone. Successful treatment of diabetes requires the coordinated efforts of the person with diabetes, the family, the community, and the multidisciplinary health-care team.

Diabetes is ever more prevalent with an estimated 24 million people in the United States suffering from diabetes, some of whom are unaware of their diagnosis. New medications and technology are available to help fight this disease. Yet the number of health-care professionals who are experts in the treatment and education of people with diabetes has not increased. Some may find meeting the challenges of treating diabetes daunting, although they encounter people with diabetes as part of their general practice, either in the community or in the hospital. We hope that this book will assist those experienced with the care of people with diabetes and those who are relatively new to their profession or who have only a handful of patients who need diabetes education. Diabetes can occur at any age, and the challenges it creates can differ across the lifespan. It touches not only those who have the diagnosis but family, friends, employers, and others. Because the experience of living with diabetes is individual and each person and family living with diabetes is unique, diabetes educators have come to expect the unexpected and have shared learning experiences with their patients as new technology provides interesting and innovative ways to combat diabetes, its complications, and side effects of its treatment.

In *Educating Your Patient with Diabetes*, we have tried to capture both the art and the science of diabetes self-management education and have tried to reflect the various patient experiences that health-care professionals who are serving as diabetes educators might meet during their clinical encounters. We hope that this book is a useful handbook that can serve to help these educators support their patients in their diabetes self-care efforts and to help them maximize the opportunities for patient learning whether that occurs in the hospital, the medical office, or in the community.

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