

Diabetes...Until Death Do Us Part!

By Julie Paff, RD, LD, CDE

I take you...In marriage we choose to commit our life and our future to a special person. We *willingly* enter into a lifelong commitment. Just like marriage, living healthy with diabetes is a lifelong commitment, but the *difference is* that we do not choose to have a chronic disease as our life partner.

In sickness and in health...diabetes is not the flu. It doesn't go away. We need to learn to "live with it" and manage the situation. It takes effort on our part to maintain health with this disease, and to prepare for the unexpected challenges of unexpected high or low blood glucose levels. We have added responsibilities to exercise in a special way or at specific times, to choose different foods, and to take medications.

In good times and bad...my life partner in marriage will support me on the rough days and will celebrate the good days with me. With diabetes, there will be successes and struggles. Life stressors may worsen blood sugar control. Diabetes does not stay home when I am on vacation. We need to plan for that pizza party and weekend get-away to minimize the adverse effects and to be successful managing the disease.

Until death do us part...diabetes is essentially a lifetime commitment that we didn't choose to make. The good news is that lifestyle decisions can help you to live a healthier even after the diagnosis. The commitment to "live healthy" with a disease is a different promise, but the lifestyle changes we make to manage a chronic disease will allow us to make the most of life and all those commitments you choose to make (marriage, family, faith, career and personal interests).

The contract...Living healthy with any diabetes involves an ongoing collaboration with your health providers to identify the best disease-management strategy for *you at this point* in your disease process. With diabetes we need to consider:

- Meals, meal times, specific food choices and portions.
- Finding time for exercise.
- Taking medications for blood sugar and more.
- Incorporate all the diabetes management needs into a real life with work, family and community demands.

Staying Healthy...Lifestyle makes all the difference in staying healthy and managing diabetes. Good control doesn't just happen. Just like a marriage, managing diabetes requires commitment, effort and compromise.

Who are the Experts? Com and learn how to stay healthy with diabetes from experts—people who found ways to overcome the challenges they faced in managing their own diabetes. Seton is offering a free diabetes educational support seminar entitled **Living Healthy with Diabetes**. The program will feature four persons with diabetes who have first-hand experience with staying on a healthy course after the diagnosis. You can register:

- Online at www.seton.net/diabetes
- By phone at 512/324-1891 option 2
- By email at ded-mnt@seton.org Please include a phone number to allow a reminder call

ABOUT THE SPONSOR: If you have a diabetes and need some help in establishing new lifestyle strategies, Seton Diabetes and Nutrition Therapy Services can help with a full range of diabetes education classes, diabetes prevention services, and diabetes support sessions:

- Diabetes Education Classes and Individual Consultations
- Nutrition counseling to bring the science of disease management to your plate.
- Wellness and Prevention Counseling on an individual basis or in corporate and community group programs.
- Diabetes Support Educational Sessions to keep you on track if you have diabetes.

For more information, call 512/324-1891 or visit our website at www.seton.org/diabetes

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Julie Paff, RD, LD, CDE is a Certified Diabetes Educator and a Registered/Licensed Dietitian with the Seton Education Center. She has over thirty years of professional experience and her passion is diabetes and heart disease management and prevention.