

Connecting Thread

Diabetes Self-Management Education and Support (DSMES) Services

BACKGROUND

Diabetes self-management education and support (DSMES) services help people keep on track to live well with diabetes. Diabetes care and education specialists (DCESS) are specialized health care providers who have the education, experience, and credentialing to help people with diabetes learn self-care behaviors. As part of a person's health care team, DCESS provide comprehensive, patient-centered, and evidence-based education, skills, training, and support to people with diabetes. They can be:

- A health care provider such as a nurse, physician, registered dietitian, pharmacist, exercise physiologist, physical therapist, or physician assistant.
- A community health worker or other lay health professional, such as a peer counselor, pharmacy technician, medical assistant, certified nursing assistant, nutrition and dietetics technician, or health navigator.

DSMES services are an ongoing source of resources, tools, and support. They are personalized to the goals and needs of the person with diabetes. They can be offered one-on-one, in group sessions, or both. They can also be provided online or through telehealth.

DSMES services can help a person with diabetes:

- Make better decisions about diabetes care and self-management.
- Work with their health care team to get ongoing help and support.
- Understand how to take care of their diabetes by:
 - Eating healthy.
 - Being active.
 - Checking their blood sugar (glucose).
 - Taking their medicines.
 - Solving problems and planning ahead.
 - Coping with feelings of stress or anxiety.
 - Reducing risks of complications and health problems.

They have also been shown to:

- Lower A1C levels.
- Prevent or reduce diabetes complications.
- Improve quality of life.
- Lower medical expenses.
- Help people feel more empowered to manage their diabetes.

As the leader of a *New Beginnings* group, you can share information about programs that offer DSMES services in your area. You can also encourage your participants to ask their health care provider for a referral—even if they've already received DSMES services from somewhere else.

☆ KEY POINTS

- 1. Diabetes care and education specialists (DCESs) are available to help you live well with diabetes.** As a member of your health care team, a DCES works with you to create a personal management plan for your diabetes that fits your life. They will provide you with comprehensive care to address all aspects of your physical and emotional health so you can better manage your diabetes and reduce the risk of complications.
- 2. DSMES services are a trusted source of information and support.** An organization offering DSMES services must be accredited by the Association of Diabetes Care & Education Specialists (ADCES) or recognized by the American Diabetes Association (ADA). Because these programs have been accredited or recognized, they meet the high standards of these associations and are based on national guidelines. You can rest assured that you are getting the most up-to-date and useful information on how to manage your diabetes.
- 3. DSMES services are individualized for you and can also connect you to a larger community of other people with diabetes.** Your DCES can help you set goals and make changes in the areas that you need the most, while connecting you to others who are experiencing similar challenges and concerns about diabetes self-management.
- 4. DSMES services are more than just information on healthy eating.** While managing your daily meal and snack plans is crucial to your diabetes management, there are so many other topics that DSMES services can help you with. These include how to manage stress and anxiety, how to reduce risk of complications from diabetes, how to properly take medicines, how to problem-solve and plan for emergencies, and ways to fit physical activity into a busy schedule.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT DSMES

Question: Where can I find DSMES services from accredited or recognized programs?

Answer: Using the ADCES online search tool or the ADA service finder tool, you can easily search for programs in your area. You can also find listings of online and app-based programs.

Question: Will DSMES services cost me anything?

Answer: Most insurance plans, including Medicare, will cover up to 10 hours of diabetes education, or DSMES services at a time. This is sometimes also called diabetes self-management training or DSMT.

Question: How do I get a referral for DSMES services?

Answer: Ask your primary care provider if they can refer you at your next visit. Even if you have participated in DSMES services or other diabetes education in the past, it is an ongoing resource that is available for you.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (CONTINUED)

Question: Can anyone living with diabetes participate in DSMES services?

Answer: Yes, DSMES services is available to all people with diabetes—whether you have just been diagnosed or have had diabetes for many years. It also doesn't matter what type of diabetes you have (such as type 1 or type 2). Self-management skills are important to all people living with diabetes.

Question: When is a good time to sign up for DSMES services?

Answer: DSMES services offered in accredited or recognized programs are available anytime you need support to stay on track managing your diabetes, but the four critical times for delivery of DSMES services are:

- At diagnosis
- During annual assessment
- If new complicating factors arise
- Upon transitions in care

Ask your health care provider at your next visit about how DSMES services can help you.

RESOURCES

For People With Diabetes

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC): [Living with Diabetes](#)
- American Diabetes Association: [Find a Diabetes Education Program in Your Area](#)
- Association of Diabetes Care & Education Specialists:
 - [Find a Diabetes Program in Your Area](#)
 - [How a Diabetes Care and Education Specialist Can Help You](#)

For Supporting People With Diabetes

- [DSMES Toolkit](#) (resources and tools to assist state health departments and their partners in increasing the use of DSMES programs)
- [The DSMES Toolkit: Your One-Stop Shop for Successful Diabetes Self-Management Education and Support Services](#) (webinar recording)
- [Discovering the Full Super Powers of DSMES](#) (webinar recording)
- [National Standards for DSMES](#)