



spotlight on health

Supporting A Loved One With Diabetes

(NAPSA)—Alfred Dimps works hard at eating right, staying active and following a lifestyle plan designed to help people with diabetes control their disease. Except that Alfred doesn't have diabetes—his wife Linda does.

After Linda was diagnosed with type 2 diabetes in 1997, she took her prescribed medication but didn't change her eating or exercise habits. Soon she developed a kidney problem.

Then, four years ago, Linda's mother passed away from diabetes complications. She was on dialysis, suffered a heart attack, and lost her vision. Linda saw the devastating effects that diabetes had on her mother's health and vowed to avoid the same fate. So in 2002 Linda and Alfred made some changes. They began to take her diabetes more seriously and to manage it better.

The National Diabetes Education Program (NDEP) encourages friends and family of the more than 20 million Americans living with diabetes to be active in supporting their loved ones. The active support of loved ones helps people with diabetes live longer, healthier lives. With Alfred's support, Linda is learning to control her diabetes—for life.

The Dimpes worked together to plan lifestyle changes that helped both of them feel better, stay healthy and control Linda's diabetes. Linda walks and takes water aerobics at a local community center. Alfred prepares most of their meals and takes simple steps to make the meals healthy and delicious. He bakes food instead of frying, cuts back on salt and uses different spices.



Families need to support each other when a member is diagnosed with diabetes.

"I do a lot of research," he says. "I read the brochures that Linda gets from her doctor and diabetes education classes, and I keep up on what's going on with the disease. Together, we make this work."

Linda also manages her diabetes by controlling her ABCs: A1C (a blood glucose test), blood pressure, and cholesterol. Through her healthy habits, Linda has dropped 58 pounds; she even lost a shoe size. She has greatly reduced her risk for kidney disease, heart attack, stroke and other deadly complications. Alfred, who struggled with high blood pressure in the past, has lost 52 pounds and his blood pressure is now under control.

For advice on how to help a loved one with diabetes, visit www.ndep.nih.gov or call 1-800-438-5383 to download or order a copy of *Tips for Helping a Person with Diabetes*. Developed in partnership with the American Association of Diabetes Educators, the sheet includes a list of resources for additional support and some great ideas from diabetes educators, nutritionists and other health care professionals.