SWEET Success

California Diabetes and Pregnancy Program

Tip of the Month
~ # 5 ~

Tips for Lowering STRESS

After you have attended to your patients' stress levels by acknowledging and supporting the stresses they are undergoing and the feelings they are having about those stresses, there are many **concrete** ideas and suggestions you can offer to them (and even do yourself). Here are just two:

1. Ask "Are you exercising?" and/or "Are you interested in exercising?" Americans who report they are "very concerned" about stress exercise **less**. Roughly a third (36 percent) said they did not exercise in the last week, versus a quarter (27 percent) of those "not at all concerned" about stress (in a study from 2006).

   Exercise is a big stress-buster. Whatever way someone can fit more physical activity into their day is useful. For some people, exercise means going to the gym or playing a team sport and that is probably not realistic for a pregnant mom. Be clear that exercise can be as simple as chasing your four-year-old up and down the stairs seven times in a row or walking with friends and their kids to the park or in the mall.

2. If you have a long "To Do" list for your patient and she is already stressed, ask **her** which item is the most important for her. Let the one she picked be the only one that she is required to manage for at least one week. "Keep it Simple" can often keep stress levels from jumping higher.

Do you have any good tips for lowering stress that you already implement? We would love to hear about them. Send your regional team a quick email and let me know what you already do to support your Sweet Success moms.

And thank you.