

Survival Kit

The Five-minute Education Kit

A Document for Health Care Providers and Patients

Lack of time is, and always will be, a frequent excuse for not educating patients with diabetes. The Executive Committee of the DESG has decided to approach this problem in a very pragmatic way. After extensive enquiries, many physicians told us that they would be willing to spend five minutes to teach their patients but they did not, because of lack of specific guidelines. This is the reason why we have organised two seminars to deal with the difficult problem of 'Five-minute education for patients with diabetes'.

Even five minutes can be part of life-long learning. Shortage of time makes it even more necessary to identify the most efficient strategies. This is why we have developed the concept of the Survival Kit for Health Care Providers and Patients, the concept being, 'Don't teach, but at least give just the key information to your patient'.

With this objective in mind two groups of doctors, nurses and dieticians, all having large experience in the field of diabetes care and patient education, attended two workshops held in Switzerland. The first workshop was devoted to the selection and editing of significant topics to be taught; the second workshop focused on the optimal use of this survival kit among health care teams. The two workshops totalled 57 participants, including doctors, nurses, dieticians who came from 24 different countries. Altogether, their centres have totalled approximately 250000 hours experience of teaching to patients! This document is the fruit of this large clinical experience in patient education and care.

This Survival Kit has been edited as follows: there are 9 topics, each of which has 2 parts:

- a guideline for the health care providers
- a summary under the form of a handout for patients

The handout has been written in larger letters than that of the guideline in order to facilitate reading by patients.

Note that there may be important local cultural variations related to the different national health Systems but we think that these recommendations may still serve as guidelines for the majority of countries.

From the introduction by Jean-Philippe Assal
Geneva, 1995

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These documents have also been published as a Working Party Report by the journal Diabetic Medicine, 1995; 12: 1022-1043.