
Good Health With Diabetes—Through Exercise

Regular exercise may help you:

Better control your blood sugar.
Control your weight.
Make your body's own insulin work better (Type II diabetes).
Improve your heart and blood circulation and reduce your risks of heart disease.
Reduce STRESS, increase your energy level, and just make you feel GOOD!

Before you begin:

Talk with your health care team about the kind of exercise you would like to do, and have your doctor approve your exercise plan.

Because any increase in physical activity can lower your blood sugar, you may need to change your meal plan or medication. Talk to your doctor before making any changes.

General Guidelines

Usually the best time to exercise is an hour after meals. Blood sugar levels are highest and the risks of hypoglycemia (low blood sugar) are lowest. It is **NOT** a good idea to plan to exercise when your insulin or oral medication is working its hardest (peaking). This combination can cause low blood sugar reactions.

Blood sugar should be tested one-half to one hour after exercising. Blood sugar levels should be between 100 and 120 if you use insulin and no lower than 80 if you use oral medication or do not use medicine to treat your diabetes. Lower levels may cause a lag effect (a low blood sugar occurring several hours later as a result of earlier exercise) or a rebound (an abnormally high blood sugar a few hours later). It is important to note these effects so you can adjust your medication and how much you exercise.

***IF YOU ARE SICK, DO NOT EXERCISE UNTIL YOUR BLOOD SUGAR LEVELS ARE BACK TO NORMAL.
NEVER EXERCISE IF BLOOD SUGAR LEVELS ARE CONSISTENTLY HIGH OR IF KETONES ARE PRESENT.***

Unplanned Exercise, Monitoring,

Monitoring,

You can't always find the perfect time to exercise. Sometimes you might have the chance to exercise or might have to exert yourself just when your medication **Snacks** is peaking, or just before a regularly scheduled meal. To balance the energy needed to exercise, the sugar available from food, and your medication, you may need to eat extra food at these times.

What kind of

If you plan to exercise for 30 minutes, eat 10-15 grams of carbohydrate (1 bread or 1 fruit) to help maintain your blood sugar level. If the exercise lasts one hour, eat 7-8 grams of protein and 30 grams of carbohydrate (1 meat, 1 bread, and 1 fruit exchange). For exercise such as playing hockey; racquetball; shoveling heavy snow; or riding a bicycle, you may need to add even more snacks if you haven't planned for the exercise and adjusted your medication beforehand.

Walking is convenient, inexpensive, and does not require any special skills. You **exercise is best?** may also want to ride a bicycle or do stair-stepping exercise. The key is choosing something that you like and will stay with. Also, you need to choose something that you will be able to do for at least 20 minutes 3 times per week.

Start out at a low to moderate level and gradually work up to a moderately hard level of exercise. If you are unable to carry on a conversation, you are working too hard. Ask your doctor or nurse how to monitor your heart rate, so you can measure your exercise intensity.

Make sure to warm up with stretches and easy walking for 5-10 minutes before you start exercising. Cool down afterward in the same manner.

Other tips

Keep diabetes identification with you at all times.

Wear cotton socks and good supportive shoes.

Make sure to drink plenty of fluids before, during, and after exercise.

Always have some money with you when you exercise, in case you feel sick and need to call for help or need to buy a snack.

Keep a snack with you that contains real sugar while you exercise.

Check your feet daily for blisters, cuts, or bruises.

Avoid exercising in extremely hot or cold weather.

Avoid injecting insulin into sites that will be involved in your exercising.

AND DON'T FORGET TO HAVE FUN!

