

Diabetes and Exercise

Exercise has a significant impact in the management of diabetes. Exercise can help control weight and blood sugar levels. Exercise can also help prevent heart disease, which is common for people with diabetes.

First, Consult the Doctor!

Regular exercise is an important component in balancing blood sugar levels. Exercise changes the way the body reacts to insulin. Therefore, a diabetic should consult their doctor before beginning an exercise program. The doctor will instruct them:

- To check their blood sugar before and after exercise. The doctor will provide the optimum levels for before and after exercise. If blood sugar levels are too high or too low before exercise, a diabetic should wait until the doctor's suggested optimum level is reached before beginning exercise.
- About which exercises are right for them.
- To check their feet for blisters or sores before and after exercise.
- To drink plenty of fluids before, during and after exercise.
- To warm up before exercise and to cool down afterward.
- To wear proper shoes and socks.
- To have a snack handy in case their blood sugar level drops too low.

It is important to remember that temperature also changes how the human body absorbs insulin. Diabetics should be extra cautious in extreme hot or cold conditions.

What Type of Exercise Is Right?

The doctor will recommend the right type of exercise for each specific diabetic patient. Most will recommend aerobic exercise such as walking, jogging, bicycling or dancing. If a person has problems with nerves in their feet or legs, their doctor may recommend exercises that keep them off their feet such as swimming, rowing, or chair exercises.

Get Moving!

Try activities such as gardening, yardwork, tai chi, golfing, walking, biking to a friend's house, going for a swim, basketball, dodgeball, jumprope, weight lifting, skating, canoeing, skiing, tennis, or softball. Try a new activity each week to keep the physical activity challenging and interesting.

How Much Exercise Is Right?

Doctors recommend 30 minutes of exercise daily for fitness. Being physically active at least 10 minutes at a time will maintain fitness. Vary exercise routines to include stretching, balancing, resistance, strength-building, aerobics and weight-bearing activities.



For more information on diabetes and exercise, visit the following websites:

<http://www.diabetes.org/weightloss-and-exercise/exercise/overview.jsp>

<http://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/faq/exercise.htm>