



# Getting Active with Diabetes

Exercise, healthy eating habits and diabetes go hand and hand. But you must prepare carefully to exercise wisely.

## THE BENEFITS OF EXERCISE

Ask people why they exercise and you'll get different answers. Some common benefits are:

- more energy
- better blood sugar control
- less stress
- improved self-esteem
- lower cholesterol level
- less medication
- easier weight control
- increased strength
- lower blood pressure
- better appearance
- lower triglycerides

## GETTING READY TO EXERCISE

Always check with your doctor before you begin an exercise program. The doctor may suggest a physical to be sure your body can handle it. You may even need a stress test to prove your heart is healthy enough.

Your medical team will help you adjust your diabetic medications if your blood sugar readings change when you exercise. Do not exercise if your blood sugar is above 250 or below 100 before you begin. Get back in a safe blood sugar range before you start exercising.

Once you have your doctor's OK, start slowly. You may want to get advice from an exercise specialist that knows about diabetes. Do less than you think you can do at first and increase your efforts gradually. If you overdo, you may not want to ever "do" again.

Buy the right equipment. Even if you just plan to walk, invest in the best shoes possible. Ask a foot doctor about the shoes that are ideal for your exercise choice.

## EXERCISING SAFELY



Test your blood sugar before and after you exercise. You may even need to test during the activity if it is for a long time or very strenuous. Carry a snack of quick acting carbohydrate. Good choices are juice, glucose gel or tablets, a small packet of honey or some life savers.

Drink plenty of water, especially on hot days. Drink at least 12-16 ounces before you start and drink 4 - 6 ounces every 20 minutes. Avoid alcohol or caffeine.

Wear a visible diabetes I.D. You will also be safer if you exercise with a partner who knows you have diabetes. Most people enjoy exercise more if they do it with a friend.

## AFTER EXERCISE

If you exercise more than usual, you may have problems with low blood sugar reactions up to 24 hours later. Check your blood sugar more often and be prepared to treat it.

If you exercise regularly, you may need less diabetes medication or more food. Ask your doctor about your specific needs.

Always check your feet after exercise. Report any problems to your doctor. A small blister or cut can become a big problem quickly if not handled properly.

Keep drinking plenty of water.

Once you begin exercising regularly, you will miss it when you can't do it. The first few weeks may be tough, but the benefits of regular activity will last a lifetime.

## QUESTIONS TO ASK

1. What kind of exercise do I want to try?
2. When can I schedule a physical exam with my doctor?
3. Who will exercise with me?

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