

EXERCISE

IT'S GOOD FOR YOUR DIABETES

By Johanna Burani, MS, RD, CDE

We all live very busy lives, so it can be hard to find time for exercise. We use cars, machines and tools to help us get our work done faster. But those things take away much of our daily movement. So we must plan to keep our bodies moving. Why? Because moving the body is good for it.

EXERCISE AND DIABETES

If you have type 1 diabetes, ask your doctor or diabetes educator how to lower the amount of insulin you take when you exercise. You don't want your blood glucose to drop too low. Always check your blood glucose level before and after exercise. If you work out for a long time, you may need to check during your activity. Never exercise on an empty stomach: Eat a snack before or right after your exercise and drink water while you are exercising. It is also a good habit to carry glucose tablets or gel or some other fast-acting sugar source with you in case you feel weak during your exercise.

If you have type 2 diabetes and take insulin, follow the same rules as for type 1. If you take oral medicines or no drugs at all for your diabetes, it is still good to speak to your doctor or diabetes educator about your exercise plans. Test your blood glucose level before and after exercise to see if you need a snack. That will also show you

to what extent exercise affects your blood glucose level. If you exercise for a long time, be sure to bring along a snack, such as fruit or yogurt. And always have water with you to drink.

EXERCISE GUIDELINES

The American Diabetes Association recommends people with prediabetes and diabetes to be physically active at least 150 minutes every week. That means 30 minutes of exercise five days a week. To do so, you can walk, play softball, mow the lawn, clean the house, take an exercise class or anything else you like to do. You can wear a pedometer on your belt or waistband. That small tool counts how many steps you take each day. A good long-term goal is to reach 10,000 steps every day. It is common sense to start at a comfortable level and increase the time and speed of your exercise over a period of time. To get the most from your exercise, do it most days every week throughout the year.



5 tips for feeling your best during and after exercise:

1 Plan your exercise

Plan your exercise. Think about what you can and want to do. Choose what days, what time, for how long and what you will do. Try to follow your plan.

2 Eat the right meals

Eat a meal that contains carbohydrates one–three hours before you exercise. Examples: a sandwich or breakfast cereal, milk and fruit.

3 Drink water

Drink 8 ounces of water 20 minutes before starting your exercise. Do not drink ice cold water, which may give you stomach cramps. Drink 8 ounces of water every 20–30 minutes during your exercise.

4 Check your blood glucose

Check your blood glucose level before and after you exercise. Also check during a long exercise or if you don't feel right.

And you may need to check your blood glucose level during the night if you have exercised for a long time or did intense or unusual activities. That's to make sure your blood glucose level doesn't drop too low while you are asleep.

5 Speak to your doctor

Always talk with your doctor or diabetes educator before you start an exercise program. Make sure they agree on your exercise plan.