
Diabetes and Being Active

Along with healthy eating, being active is a great way to help manage diabetes. Talk to your healthcare team before starting a physical activity program.

Benefits of an active lifestyle:

- Helps insulin work better to lower blood glucose
- Good for your heart and lungs
- Gives you more energy
- Promotes better sleep
- Helps build strength
- Helps meet your weight loss goals when combined with lowering calorie intake
- Helps delay or prevent complications of diabetes
- Good for your emotional health and a way to relieve stress

How to increase your activity:

- Aim for 150 minutes of activity over 3-5 days a week
- Start slow and steady
 - Begin with 10 minutes of activity daily and work up to your weekly goal
- Limit sitting to no more than 30 minutes at a time
- Make activity a life-long habit
 - Find activities you enjoy
 - Exercise with a friend or group to make it fun
- Don't let more than two days go by without being active

What type of activities can you do?

- Choose activities that get your heart beating faster.
 - Walking
 - Swimming
 - Biking
- Flexibility and balance activities can help make daily tasks easier, reduce tension in muscles and joints, and can help prevent falls.
 - Gentle stretches
 - Yoga or tai chi classes
- Strength and resistance activities can help build muscle strength.

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- Body weight exercises
 - Weight machines or free weights
 - Resistance band exercises

Stay safe while being active:

- Carry identification and a cell phone in case of an emergency
- Drink plenty of water before and after activity
- Exercise with a buddy
- Wear closed-toe shoes that fit your feet well
- Dress for the weather
- Use correct safety equipment for the activity
- Skip activity if you are sick

Being active may cause a low blood sugar:

- Insulin and sulfonylureas (glipizide, glimepiride) may put you at risk for hypoglycemia during activity
- Being active may cause your blood sugar to drop **faster than usual**
- Reduce your risk for low blood glucose:
 - Carry glucose tablets when you exercise
 - Check your blood glucose if you have been active longer than usual or if the activity was unplanned
- You may need a carbohydrate containing snack before being active depending on length of activity, blood glucose before activity, and time of the day
 - Many variables can contribute to low blood glucose during exercise
 - Discuss how to avoid hypoglycemia with your Dietitian or Diabetes Educator