

Exercise to Help Control Your Blood Glucose

Being physically active every day can help you control your blood glucose. That's because an active lifestyle can improve your body's ability to use insulin. Daily activity can also help reduce the risk of complications of diabetes. It can help you maintain a healthy weight. And it's a great way to relieve stress. If you aren't normally active, be sure to consult your health care provider before getting started.

How Much Activity Do You Need?

Try to do a total of at least 150 minutes per week of aerobic exercise spread over 3 or more days. If daily activity is new to you, start slow and steady. Begin with 5 to 10 minutes of activity each day. Then work up to at least 30 minutes a day. Do this by adding a few minutes each week. It doesn't have to be done all at once. Each active period throughout the day adds up.

Just Move!

You don't have to join a gym or own pricey sports equipment. Just get out and walk. Walking is an aerobic exercise that makes your heart and lungs work harder. Walking requires only a sturdy pair of sneakers and your own feet. The more you walk, the easier it gets.

- Schedule time every day to move your feet.
- Make it part of your daily routine.
- Walk with a friend or a group to keep it interesting and fun.
- Try taking several short walks during the day to meet your daily activity goal.

A Pedometer Makes Every Step Count

A pedometer is a small device that keeps track of how many steps you take. You can clip it to your belt (or a strap on your arm or leg) and go about your daily routine. At the end of the day, the pedometer shows the total number of steps you took. Use a pedometer to set daily activity goals for yourself. For instance, if you walk 4,000 steps a day, try adding 200 more steps each day.





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Adding Resistance Exercise

Resistance exercise (also called strength training) makes muscles stronger. It also helps muscles use insulin better. Ask your health care provider whether this type of exercise is right for you. If it is, your health care provider can help you work it in to your activity plan.

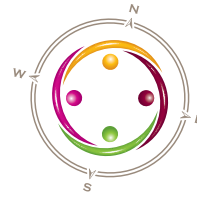
Be Smart When You Exercise

Being active may cause blood glucose to drop faster than usual. This is especially true if you take certain medications to control your blood glucose. But there are things you can do to help reduce the risk of low blood sugar levels. Keep these tips in mind:

- Always carry identification when you exercise outside your home. Carry a cell phone to use in case of emergency.
- If you can, include friends and family in your activities.
- Wear a medical ID bracelet that says you have diabetes.
- Use the right safety equipment for the activity you do (such as a bicycle helmet when you ride a bicycle outdoors). Wear closed-toed shoes that fit your feet well.
- Drink plenty of water before and during activity.
- Keep a fast-acting sugar (such as glucose tablets) on hand in case of low blood glucose.
- Dress properly for the weather. Wear a hat if it's sunny, or wait until evening if it's too hot.
- Avoid being active for long periods in very hot or very cold weather.
- Skip activity if you're sick.

Notice How Activity Affects Blood Sugar

Physical activity is important when you have diabetes. But you need to keep an eye on your blood glucose level. Check often if you have been active for longer than usual, or if the activity was unplanned. Make it a habit to check your blood glucose before being active. And check again a few hours later. Use your log book to write down how activity affects your blood glucose. If you take insulin, you may be able to adjust your dose before a planned activity. This can help prevent lows. Talk to your health care provider to learn more.



Diabetes: Understanding Carbohydrates, Fats, and Protein

Food is a source of fuel and nourishment for your body. It's also a source of pleasure. Having diabetes doesn't mean you have to eat special foods or give up desserts. Instead, you can learn how to plan meals to suit your body. To start, learn how different foods affect blood glucose.



Carbohydrates

Carbohydrates are the main source of fuel for the body. Carbohydrates raise blood glucose. Many people think carbohydrates are only found in pasta or bread. But carbohydrates are actually in many kinds of foods.

- **Sugars** occur naturally in foods such as fruit, milk, honey, and molasses. Sugars can also be added to many foods, from cereals and yogurt to candy and desserts. Sugars raise blood glucose.
- **Starches** are found in bread, cereals, pasta, and dried beans. They're also found in corn, peas, potatoes, yams, acorn squash, and butternut squash. Starches also raise blood glucose.
- **Fiber** is found in foods such as vegetables, fruits, and whole grains. Unlike other carbs, fiber isn't digested or absorbed. So it doesn't raise blood glucose. In fact, fiber can help keep blood glucose from rising too fast. It also helps keep blood cholesterol at a healthy level.

Did You Know?

Even though carbohydrates raise blood glucose, it's best to have some in every meal. They are an important part of a healthy diet.

Fat

Fat is an energy source that can be stored until needed. Fat does not raise blood glucose. However, saturated fats and trans fats can raise blood cholesterol, increasing the risk of heart disease. Fat is also high in calories, which can cause weight gain. Not all types of fat are the same.

More Healthy

- **Monounsaturated fats** are mostly found in vegetable oils such as olive, canola, and peanut oils. They are also found in avocados and some nuts. Monounsaturated fats are healthy for your heart. That's because they lower LDL (unhealthy) cholesterol.
- **Polyunsaturated fats** are mostly found in vegetable oils such as corn, safflower, and soybean oils. They are also found in some seeds, nuts, and fish. Polyunsaturated fats lower LDL cholesterol. So, choosing them instead of saturated fats is healthy for your heart.

Diabetes: Understanding Carbohydrates, Fats, and Protein

Fat (continued)

Less Healthy

- **Saturated fats** are found in animal products such as meat, poultry, whole milk, lard, and butter. Saturated fats raise LDL cholesterol and are **not** healthy for your heart.
- **Hydrogenated oils** and trans fats are formed when vegetable oils are processed into solid fats. They are found in many processed foods. Hydrogenated oils and trans fats raise LDL cholesterol and lower HDL (healthy) cholesterol. They are **not** healthy for your heart.

Protein

Protein helps the body build and repair muscle and other tissue. Protein has little or no effect on blood glucose. However, many foods that contain protein also contain saturated fat. By choosing low-fat protein sources, you can get the benefits of protein without the extra fat.

- **Plant protein** is found in dry beans and peas, nuts, and soy products such as tofu and soymilk. These sources tend to be cholesterol-free and low in saturated fat.
- **Animal protein** is found in fish, poultry, meat, cheese, milk, and eggs. These contain cholesterol and can be high in saturated fat. Aim for lean, lower-fat choices.