

Exercise and Diabetes



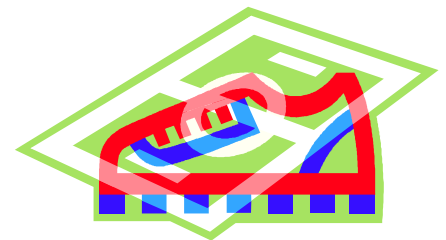
Exercise changes the way your body reacts to insulin. Regular exercise makes your body more sensitive to insulin and may require you to adjust your insulin and other medications. You may need to check your blood sugar level before and after exercising. Your doctor can tell you what your blood sugar level should be before and after exercise. If your blood sugar level is too low or too high right before you plan to exercise, it's better to wait until the level improves.

Hypoglycemia: Low blood sugar usually occurs gradually, so you need to pay attention to how you're feeling during exercise. You may feel a change in your heartbeat, suddenly sweat more, feel shaky or anxious, or feel hungry. When you feel this way, you should stop exercising and tell your physical therapist or physician. At physical therapy we keep candy or juice on hand to treat hypoglycemia; you should keep something to eat or drink close by wherever you work out.



Medication: In the long term, regular exercise often means you will require less medication as your body becomes more efficient in its use of insulin. It can mean the difference between "medical management" and "lifestyle management" for Type 2 diabetes. It may be helpful to keep track with a journal or diary, your glucose levels and medication use after starting an exercise program and discuss any changes with your physician and physical therapist.

Footwear: Many people with diabetes have problems with the nerves in their feet and legs, sometimes without even knowing it. So it's important that you wear shoes that fit well and have plenty of room when you exercise. Otherwise you could develop blisters or other sores on your feet that can lead to infection and other problems. You should check your feet before and after you exercise to make sure there are no blisters or other sores.



See the handout on proper foot wear for tips in picking out the right shoes.