



# Getting ready to exercise when you have Diabetes

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Exercise is good for you. It can:

- lower blood sugar
- lower blood pressure and cholesterol
- improve blood flow
- improve mood
- improve level of fitness

When you exercise, your muscles use sugar from your blood for energy. This can cause low blood sugar during or after your exercise. When you take insulin, you need to plan ahead for exercise and other activities to avoid a low blood sugar.

## What is low blood sugar?

Low blood sugar is when your blood sugar is less than 4 mmol/L. It is also called hypoglycemia.

## How do you know you have low blood sugar?

If you have a low blood sugar, you may feel one or more of these symptoms:

- nervous or irritable
- sweaty
- very hungry
- unsteady on your feet
- a headache
- blurred vision
- shaky, faint or light headed
- weak
- difficulty thinking
- abdominal pain or upset stomach
- slurred speech
- numb or tingling lips, tongue, fingers, feet

If you have one or more of these symptoms, test your blood sugar to see if it is less than 4 mmol/L. If your blood sugar is less than 4 mmol/L, you need to treat it right away. If left untreated, your symptoms could get worse and you could pass out.

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## What causes low blood sugar?

- Doing more exercise or activity than usual.
- Taking more diabetes pills or insulin than needed.
- Not eating at regular times or missing meals or snacks.
- Not eating enough food or not eating the right food.

## How do I treat a low blood sugar?

1. Eat or drink one of these fast acting sugar choices:
  - chew 4 to 5 Dex4® or 5 to 7 Dextrosol® glucose tablets
  - 3 to 4 teaspoons or 3 to 4 cubes or 3 to 4 packets of table sugar (may be dissolved in water)
  - 3 to 4 teaspoons of honey or corn syrup
  - $\frac{3}{4}$  cup to 1 cup regular pop (not sugar-free or diet)
  - $\frac{3}{4}$  cup to 1 cup fruit juice
  - 6 to 8 Lifesaver® candies
2. If you do not start to feel better in 10 to 15 minutes, test your blood sugar again. If it is less than 4 mmol/L, then eat or drink another sugar choice from the above list.
3. If your next meal or snack is more than an hour away, also have a snack with a starch and protein such as:
  - $\frac{1}{2}$  cup of milk plus 2 plain cookies
  - $\frac{1}{2}$  cup of milk with  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup cereal
  - 6 crackers with 1 oz cheese
  - 1 slice of bread with 1 tablespoon peanut butter or 1 oz meat or cheese

## How can I avoid a low blood sugar?

1. **Plan ahead for exercise.**  
You may need to adjust your intake of carbohydrates, medications or both before, during and after exercise.
2. **Check blood sugars more often.**  
Check your blood sugar before and after exercise.

Before Exercise					Exercise	After Exercise			
Date	Insulin dose	Carb intake	Blood sugar	I feel ...	Type, intensity, minutes	I feel ...	Blood sugar	Carb intake	Medication adjustment

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