



Exercise and activity for Type 2 Diabetes

Exercise and activity are important to help control your blood sugar and improve your overall health.

Exercise and activity may help you:

- ✓ Improve your blood sugar level
- ✓ Control your weight
- ✓ Lower your blood pressure
- ✓ Improve your cholesterol level
- ✓ Strengthen your muscles, heart and lungs
- ✓ Reduce the amount of medications you need
- ✓ Reduce tension or stress
- ✓ Have more energy



Always check with your doctor before starting any exercise or activity program.

What types of exercise and activities are good for me?

Choose an exercise or activity that you enjoy. It does not have to be hard or tiring. Start off slowly and work up to your goal.

Examples include:

- Walking, either outside or inside as in a shopping mall
 - wear proper fitting shoes and socks
- Housework such as vacuuming or cleaning
- Gardening
- Walking on a treadmill or using stationary bike at home
- Exercises while seated such as lifting books, lifting legs, tightening stomach muscles
- Ice skating
- Swimming or aqua fit
- Tai chi or yoga
- Cycling
- Golfing

How does exercise and activity affect my blood sugar level?

Regular exercise and activity can help you to control your blood sugar levels. When you are active, your muscles use sugar from your blood for energy.

If you take diabetes medication or insulin, you may need to plan ahead for being physically active to avoid a low blood sugar. Low blood sugar is called hypoglycemia. Low blood sugar is when your blood sugar is less than 4 mmol/L. It can happen during, right after, or many hours after you exercise.

How do I know when I have 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. Follow the steps on page 4 to treat your low blood sugar.

Always carry your blood testing supplies with you. It may be hard to tell the difference between the symptoms listed above and the tired feeling you may get after you are active.

**If you are not able to test your blood sugar,
treat your symptoms right away.**

How do I treat low blood sugar?

Step 1

Stop what you are doing.

Eat or drink one of the following with **15 to 20 grams of fast-acting carbohydrate**:

- 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
- ¾ cup to 1 cup regular pop (not sugar-free or diet)
- ¾ cup to 1 cup fruit juice
- 6 to 8 Lifesaver® candies

Step 2

- Sit down and rest for 10 to 15 minutes.
 - If you can, recheck your blood sugar levels.
 - If your blood sugar is still less than 4 mmol/L or if the symptoms of low blood sugar do not disappear, repeat step 1.
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How can I exercise or do an activity safely?

1. **Test your blood sugar level before the activity.**

Delay exercise if your blood sugar is less than 4 mmol/L or more than 14 mmol/L.

2. **Test your blood sugar level after the activity.**

Exercise can affect your blood sugar for up to one day after the activity and that is why it is important to test your blood sugar more often than usual the day after you exercise



If your blood sugar is less than 4 mmol/L follow Steps 1 and 2 on page 4 to treat low blood sugar.

3. Drink lots of water.
 4. Wear proper shoes and socks for physical activity to help keep your feet healthy.
 5. Always wear MedicAlert® identification.
 6. Always carry fast-acting carbohydrates such as glucose tablets, candies or juice.
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How do I adjust my food for an activity?

1. If your activity is not intense and weight loss is one of your goals, you may not need to eat extra food for the activity. Testing your blood sugar will help you decide.
2. For planned moderate or intense activity, discuss with your healthcare team how you can decrease your diabetes medication or insulin.
3. If you do a moderate to intense activity that will last longer than 30 minutes, you may need to eat 15 to 20 g carbohydrate.

Examples of snacks with 15 to 20 g of carbohydrate:

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|--------|--|
| 1 | 200 ml unsweetened fruit juice box |
| 1 | apple or banana |
| 1 | granola bar such as Quaker Chewy ® |
| 2 to 3 | plain cookies such as arrowroot, social tea or digestive |
| 6 to 8 | soda crackers |
| 2 | large rice cakes |
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My goal for exercise or activity:

How to adjust your diabetes medication or insulin:

Ask a member of your diabetes care team to go over your diabetes medications or insulin dose(s) when you are physically active. This can help you to determine how much diabetes medication or insulin you need when you exercise.

Being safe with my insulin injection

Do not inject your insulin into a part of your body that is active during exercise such as your arms or legs. Instead, inject it into a part of your body that is not active during exercise, such as your stomach.

Where can I get information about exercising in Hamilton?

Nutrition and Physical Activity Advice Line (Public Health and Social Services)	(905) 546-3630
Hamilton Downtown YMCA	(905) 529-7102
City of Hamilton Community Centres	(905) 546-2489
Mall Walk Lime Ridge	(905) 318-7467
YWCA Senior's Centre (Jackson & MacNab)	(905) 529-7727
YWCA Family Centre	(905) 522-9922