



Physical activity for type 2 diabetes management



This resource talks about how physical activity may affect your metabolic health. It should be used along with additional information given to you from your family doctor.

Regular physical activity can help manage metabolic health conditions such as type 2 diabetes. Studies show that people with type 2 diabetes who are more physically active have:



Better mood and increased quality of life

Improved physical functioning

Better sleep and more energy through the day

Improved control of blood sugars

Lower blood pressure

Your physical activity can be **enjoyable**, **effective**, and **safe**.



Enjoyable



Some people with type 2 diabetes find it hard to get started with physical activity. Being active with others can be a great way to make physical activity more enjoyable. Try different activities and find what works best for you in the long run. If you're not sure how to begin, consider attending an exercise class or a drop-in activity in your community, such as a walking group.

Effective



Aerobic exercise can help with mood and quality of life in type 2 diabetes. Exercise programs can reduce the amount of medication that is needed to control blood sugar. Strength, balance, and flexibility exercises are very effective for any type of metabolic condition.

Safe



The kind of physical activity you can do safely may be affected by your health conditions, your fitness level, and by your current treatments.

Getting started usually means moving 'little but often' with some light walking or similar types of activity. Gradually increase to a level that makes you feel like you are breathing heavier than normal, so that you can talk but not sing. If you feel especially tired, you can try less intense physical activity for a shorter time, or take a day off and try again the next day.

In type 2 diabetes, watch for **hypoglycemia**: Plan ahead by eating regularly, monitoring your blood sugar, and having a fast-acting carbohydrate such as hard candy. If you have nerve damage in your feet, you should check your feet before and after physical activity.

Avoid physical activity and consult your doctor if you experience any of the following symptoms:

- Unusual fatigue or weakness
- Chest pain or an irregular pulse
- Difficulty breathing
- Feeling sick during activity
- Acute pain or injury
- Unexplained dizzy spells

Helpful Resources



Contact Diabetes Canada (1-800-226-8464) to find out about different peer support groups or medically supervised programs that might be available to you. Their website has great information and specific guidelines related to diabetes and physical activity.
<http://www.diabetes.ca/diabetes-and-you/healthy-living-resources/exercise>

Doctors in the UK have put together a website with informative videos and online pamphlets, including specific advice about physical activity for different metabolic conditions.
<http://www.benefitfromactivity.org.uk/why-am-i-doing-this/conditions/metabolic-health/>

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