

Exercise and diabetes

Diabetes and Endocrinology Patient Information Leaflet

Introduction

This leaflet is for people who have diabetes. It gives information on exercising safely; and how to handle insulin, if you have it, when you exercise.

Why should I exercise?

Exercise helps improve both your general health and your diabetes. Gentle, moderate or strenuous exercise can give you the following benefits:

- Help to control weight
- Improve circulation
- Lower blood glucose
- Improve your general wellbeing

How much exercise should I do?

The Health Education Authority recommends 30 minutes of moderate physical activity on five or more days of the week. Research shows that this level of activity improves health.

Improving health may help you:

- Control your blood pressure
- Reduce your risk of heart disease
- Prevent brittle bones (osteoporosis) in later life
- Reduce the risk of some cancers, for example, cancer of the colon (according to the Health Education Authority)
- Reduce diabetes complications

Physical activity can include gardening, brisk walking, cycling, swimming, dancing and playing.

How do I get started?

Please note that if you are in poor health you may need to be examined by your GP before taking up strenuous exercise.

You can start by asking yourself the following questions:

- Can I use stairs rather than lifts, walk a couple of bus stops, park a bit further away from work or the shops?
- How long will my activity last and how energetic will I be? Could I do more?

If you are new to exercise, set an achievable target and build up to it gradually.

Moderate exercise activity should raise your heartbeat and make you feel warm and slightly – but not uncomfortably – out of breath.

When during the day should I exercise?

Try to choose a time when your energy levels are highest.

Will exercise affect my diabetes?

Depending on the type of exercise you do, you may need to lower your insulin dose and increase the food you eat to avoid low blood glucose (hypos). The following will guide you:

- **Gentle activity:** this may not affect your blood glucose levels.
- **Short strenuous exercise** (for example, squash): you may need extra food before, during and after your activity.

- **After exercise:** your muscles will take at least one to two hours to refuel. Check your blood glucose levels regularly for several hours after exercise to prevent delayed hypos, which may occur during the night.

(For those who have insulin for diabetes) How do I handle my insulin when I exercise?

- You must test blood glucose levels regularly to check the balance between your activity, insulin and snacks.
- Ask your diabetes nurse for advice about reducing your insulin dose before planned exercise.
- Eat extra food before and after exercise as well as, or instead of, reducing your insulin dose.
- Exercise can affect the absorption rate of insulin. Some people prefer to inject into their stomach before exercise as research shows that insulin is absorbed quicker from this area.
- Make sure that you have some sugar, glucose tablets, chocolate or a sugary drink with you while you exercise.
- The national controlling bodies of some sports (for example, solo sailing, hang gliding, some forms of motor sport) do not allow people taking insulin to participate. These restrictions do vary so check with Diabetes UK for up-to-date advice.

Can I find out more?

You can find out more from:

Diabetes UK on 0345 123 2399

www.diabetes.org.uk

If you have any questions, or if there is anything you do not understand about this leaflet, please contact:

Diabetes Team on 01384 244399 (9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday)

Russells Hall Hospital switchboard number: 01384 456111

This leaflet can be downloaded or printed from:

<http://dudleygroup.nhs.uk/services-and-wards/diabetes-and-endocrinology/>

If you have any feedback on this patient information leaflet, please email dgft.patient.information@nhs.net

This leaflet can be made available in large print, audio version and in other languages, please call 0800 073 0510.

للحصول على هذه النشرة بحجم أكبر، وعلى شكل إصدار صوتي و بلغات أخرى، الرجاء الاتصال بالرقم 08000730510.

此宣传单可提供大字版本、音频版本和其它语言版本，请拨打电话：0800 073 0510。

Ulotka dostępna jest również w dużym druku, wersji audio lub w innym języku. W tym celu zadzwoń pod numer 0800 073 0510.

ਇਹ ਪਰਚਾ ਵੱਡੇ ਅੱਖਰਾਂ, ਬੋਲ ਕੇ ਰੀਕਾਰਡ ਕੀਤਾ ਹੋਇਆ ਅਤੇ ਦੂਸਰੀਆਂ ਭਾਸ਼ਾਵਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਵੀ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤ ਹੋ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ, 0800 073 0510 ਤੇ ਫੋਨ ਕਰੋ ਜੀ।

Aceasta broșura poate fi pusă la dispoziție tipărită cu caractere mari, versiune audio sau în alte limbi, pentru acest lucru va rugăm sunați la 0800 073 0510.

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