

October 26, 2022

Exercise and Diabetes

Living a healthy lifestyle by doing regular exercise is an important part of preventing and managing type 2 diabetes. Exercise helps to lower blood sugar levels by improving insulin sensitivity in your body. This can help to prevent diabetes-related complications.

Exercise also helps to manage weight by burning calories, increasing lean muscle mass, and improving metabolism. It can lower risk of heart disease, lower blood pressure, reduce cholesterol, lower stress, improve bone strength, increase energy levels, and improve sleep quality.

Two forms of exercise that are beneficial for people living with type 2 diabetes include aerobic activity and resistance activity. Aerobic activity is any continuous movement that raises your heart rate and breathing, such as walking, biking, and dancing. Resistance activity is a form of brief repetitive movements using body weight, resistance band or dumbbells, which helps to build strength.

How much exercise should we aim for? Diabetes Canada recommends at least 150 minutes of moderate-to-vigorous intensity aerobic exercise each week. This can be broken up into smaller 10-minute intervals at a time, such as two 10-minute walks per day to meet the weekly target. Diabetes Canada also recommends adding in resistance exercise 2-3 times per week. Aim to not allow more than two consecutive days to go by without any form of exercise. Also, break up long periods of sitting throughout the day by standing up at least every 20-30 minutes. If these targets are met, physical activity has been shown to be just as effective in managing blood sugar as some diabetes medications.

If you are new to exercise, get support from a diabetes educator for resources on how to get started. Be sure to start slow and work your way up over time. Make sure to speak with your doctor to address any safety concerns before getting started on a new exercise program that is more intense than brisk walking. People living with type 2 diabetes may need to take precaution to prevent low blood sugar.

Come learn more about diabetes management and physical activity on World Diabetes Day, November 11, 2022 at Unison Health and Community Services, Keele-Rogers Site.

For more information you can reach Diabetes Education Program at 416 787 1661 ext 3303 or browse our website at <http://unisonhcs.org/programs-services/diabetes-education-program/>.

Reference: [Physical activity - Diabetes Canada](#)

Recognized by Diabetes Canada as a "Centre of Excellence" in delivering high-quality and best practice diabetes education and services.