

How can exercise help diabetes?

What will exercise do to help my diabetes?

- Reduction of body weight meaning less demand on the pancreas to produce insulin and improved sensitivity of the body to insulin.
- Reduction of blood sugar levels, skeletal muscle clears 70-90% of your blood glucose so the more you use your muscles the lower your blood sugar levels will become.
- With an exercise program including cardiovascular exercise and resistance training your body will become more efficient at transporting insulin around the body meaning your body becomes more sensitive to insulin.

How can exercise benefit my health?

- It also lowers your risk of heart disease; (Adults with diabetes are 2 to 4 times more likely to suffer a cardiac event, including heart attack or stroke).
- Exercise can induce the release of the body's natural feel good hormones such as serotonin and norepinephrine and the flow of oxygen to the brain generally improves mood and awareness.
- By following an exercise program you improve the amount of exercise you can do before you become fatigued. Therefore, you increase your energy levels so that daily tasks no longer leave you feeling tired or worn out.
- Exercise improves circulation to the joints and muscles which will improve your mobility and reduce your stiffness.
- An exercise program including resistance training will improve your muscle strength and tone which means your joints will have more support leading to less chance of falls.

Guidelines for exercise:

- Always check blood sugar levels before exercising, they should be 6mmole/L or above.
- Always make sure you have at least one glass of water before, during and after exercise. Like a car your body will not run well without water.
- The goal of exercise should be to increase your breathing rate so that you are breathing harder, but not so that you are puffing or panting. (You should still be able to say a short sentence)
- Make sure you have adequate clothing if you are exercising outside and good supportive footwear.

- Always carry a snack with you so that if you feel your blood sugar levels dropping you can have something to eat. (Lucozade is a good drink to take with you.)
- **If you feel any of the following symptoms stop exercise immediately –** shaking, weakness, dizziness, drowsiness, blurred vision, confusion, chest or jaw pain, tingling lips, heart palpitations, irritable or severe hunger or thirst.

What exercise can help me:

- Cardiovascular exercise which gets the heart and lungs going such as:
 - Walking
 - Dancing
 - Cycling
 - Swimming
 - Rowing
- Resistance exercise such as lifting weights or your own body weight.
- Stretching exercises for flexibility and mobility.

Some people with diabetes have decreased feeling in their feet. These people need to make sure their shoes fit well and need to check their feet after exercise for sores, blisters, irritation, cuts or other injuries.

A Pace Exercise Physiologist can provide you with an exercise program suited to your needs. Please contact PACE on (03) 9770 6770 or visit www.pacehm.com.au

References:

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