

Exercise

The importance of a healthy exercise regime

Exercise is a vital part of controlling diabetes. You will need to be active in order to successfully regulate your food and insulin and sugar levels. Any mild form of exercise is good for you - even if it is only walking.

Always carry glucose tablets and some identification saying that you have diabetes and do not walk or swim long distances alone or at times when your blood sugar levels are low. If you intend to go for a walk it is common sense to advise someone of the route you are taking and the likely time you will return.

Be sensible about your food intakes to cover any additional exertion and never overdo it. A good guide is that if you are getting out of breath you are doing too much. Remember also that hot weather increases insulin absorption and you may experience a rapid drop in your levels when exercising in heat.

If you wish to take up some form of regular activity contact your Diabetes Specialist Nurse or GP for advice, particularly if you are overweight, or the activity is likely to be strenuous.

There are many athletes and sportsmen and women with diabetes but remember that they are under strict medical supervision, often substantially increasing their carbohydrate intake and adjusting both diet and insulin accordingly. Some diabetics have even run marathons but most of us will be content with a pleasant walk. It is important to remember that exerting yourself reduces your blood sugar levels, so take care to be sensible and ensure you seek advice before taking up anything really demanding

Summary:

Eat extra carbohydrates

Only exercise within your capabilities

Always warm up and down if taking part in a strenuous form of exercise

Stop if it is getting too much for you.

Do not exercise if you feel ill or when you have a cold and stop exercising if you develop chest or leg pains, become breathless, feel dizzy or faint or if you break into a cold sweat.

Remember that exercise could result in a delayed 'hypo' later in the day.

You will get further advice from Diabetes UK and in their leaflets.

