

## DIABETES & PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Regular participation in physical activity is important for everyone, however, it is particularly important for people with diabetes.

### GENERAL BENEFITS OF PHYSICAL ACTIVITY INCLUDE:

- It helps insulin to work better which will improve your diabetes control
- It can help you maintain a healthy weight range
- It can help lower your blood pressure
- It can reduce your risk of heart disease
- It can help reduce stress and assist you to relax

### PHYSICAL ACTIVITY GUIDELINES FOR PEOPLE WITH DIABETES

- Thirty minutes a day of moderate-intensity physical activity is the goal. You can achieve this by adding together three lots of 10 minutes throughout the day.
- You do not have to go to great lengths to gain the benefits of physical activity, choose to do activities you enjoy and aim for a moderate intensity. This means you should still be able to talk during the activity without becoming too breathless.
- Warm-up your muscles by starting your activity slowly and gradually increase the pace; cool-down your muscles at the end of your activity by decreasing the pace of your activity before stopping.
- Moderate activities such as walking pose little health risk; however, before you start any activity program you should discuss suitable activities and the need for special precautions, such as adjustments to your medication with your doctor.

### PHYSICAL ACTIVITY TIPS FOR PEOPLE WITH DIABETES

There are some things you need to consider before taking part in a physical activity session:

- If your diabetes is treated with insulin or tablets you should monitor your blood glucose levels carefully before and after your activity session, and if possible during your activity (at least initially) to assess your requirements for extra food.
- If your diabetes is treated with insulin and your blood glucose level is higher than normal (or over 14 mmol/l), then it is best to delay activity until your blood glucose level has settled. If you have type 1 diabetes, and your blood glucose levels are higher than normal, you should check for ketones, and if the test is positive, do not exercise and seek medical advice.
- Eat carbohydrate-based foods as needed to prevent hypoglycaemia, such as breads, pasta and cereals before being physically active, and take some quick acting carbohydrates such as glucose lollies with you during your activity session. Extra carbohydrate is often needed after an activity session as well.
- Drink extra fluid before, during and after an activity session to avoid dehydration.
- Take care of your feet - wear comfortable and well-fitting shoes.

#### **More information:**

To find out more about resistance training, contact **Baker IDI Heart and Diabetes Institute on 9258 5050**. For more information on diabetes, please contact **Diabetes Australia-Vic on 1300 136 588** or visit [www.diabetesvic.org.au](http://www.diabetesvic.org.au)

***Remember Physical Inactivity will be more detrimental to your health than not getting up and moving!***

**For more information on physical activity call the Physical Activity Infoline on 1300 885 602**

#### **Health Check**

**If you are on medication, have had a major operation, have any medical conditions or physical limitation that restricts you or is likely to be affected by physical activity, or have any other concerns regarding your capacity for activity including recent inactivity, Vicfit recommend you consult your health professional to clarify your activity options.**

## WHAT TYPE OF ACTIVITY IS BEST?

Activity can be performed at any intensity, however it is probably best to stick to moderately intense activities such as walking, cycling, swimming and remember to start out slowly.

Resistance training can also be beneficial for people with diabetes. Resistance training is a form of physical activity that involves using a muscle (or group of muscles) through a specific range of motion using some type of resistance device (weights) or ones own body weight. Resistance training not only improves blood glucose metabolism and bone mineral density, but can also affect body composition, increasing muscle mass, energy use, strength and physical function. Resistance training should only be performed under the supervision of an appropriately trained instructor.

## GETTING STARTED AND KEEPING MOTIVATED

You are the most important source of motivation. Start your physical activity routine slowly and set realistic goals for yourself. Other factors can assist and some good tips to help you stay active are:

- **Try** to incorporate movement and activity into your normal daily routine (e.g. getting off a tram stop early to walk to work)
- **Choose** an activity you really enjoy doing. particularly if you have to make a special time to exercise
- **Be active** with a friend or family member
- **Look** for activity options that are convenient and close to your home or work
- **Set** yourself short-term, realistic, achievable goals and reward yourself sensibly when you have achieved them (e.g. over the next 3 weeks I aim to walk 3 times a week for 20 minutes)
- **Keep a weekly activity diary** so you can plan your week and keep track of your progressions and whether you are meeting your goals
- **Remember** you will have setbacks that can interrupt your activity routine. Treat setbacks as temporary and get active again as soon as you can.