

# EXERCISE & Diabetes

Although most people with diabetes can exercise safely, exercise involves some risks. To shift the benefit-to-risk ratio in your favor, take these precautions:

- **Have a medical exam before you begin your exercise program.**

This is especially important if you have not engaged in a serious exercise regimen for a number of years! Have it include an exercise test with EKG monitoring, especially if you have cardiovascular disease, are over age 35, have high blood pressure (hypertension), elevated cholesterol levels, smoke, or have a family history of heart disease.

- Inform all of your doctors of your fitness plans and goals.
- Discuss with your doctor any unusual symptoms that you experience during or after exercise.
- If you have diabetes-related complications, check with your diabetes care team about special precautions.
- Learn how to prevent and treat low blood glucose (sugar) levels (hypoglycemia). If you take oral agents or insulin, monitor your blood glucose level before, during, and after exercise.
- If you have type 1 diabetes and your blood glucose is above 250 mg/dl, check your urine for ketones. Don't exercise if ketones are present.
- Always warm up and cool down.
- Pay special attention to proper footwear. Inspect your feet daily and always after you exercise.
  - Drink plenty of fluids: any elevation in blood glucose levels can cause a greater loss of water due to the increase in urination (polyuria).
  - Take precautions when exercising outdoors when the weather is too hot and humid (see hydration above) or too cold.
  - Always have diabetes identification on you, whether it's a medical bracelet or necklace, or a card that states you have diabetes.

