



Choosing A Tour de Cure Distance

Cycling is a great sport and activity outlet for athletes with diabetes. The benefits that aerobic exercise has on insulin sensitivity, metabolism, and improved outlook on life are well documented. Cycling is an easily accessible sport, requiring little more than a well-tuned bike and the time to ride it (and ideally some friends to ride with). The American Diabetes Association Tour de Cure events provide a great degree of motivation to get out and ride, and are a great reason to push ourselves to new challenges.

Your local Tour de Cure will probably offer four different event lengths:

- A short family ride of 5-10 miles
- A medium distance 20-40 mile ride
- A 50-70 mile ride
- And the big challenge, commonly called a “Century”, a ride of 100 miles

If you sign up for the Tour de Cure, you’ll want to pick a route that will be challenging, attainable, and allow you to ride with the people you want to ride with. Your prior experience is probably the biggest thing to factor in when choosing a route. If you’ve never ridden your bike farther than 20 miles, choosing a Century is probably ill advised. However, choosing the 20-40 mile option might provide a fun amount of challenge and push you to train or ride a little bit harder than you have in the past. Here are some other things to consider when choosing a route:

- How much time can you devote to training?
 - Longer distances will require more “time in the saddle”
 - A structured training plan will help with longer rides.
- Who do you want to ride with?
 - If you are training and riding with a group, pick the greatest distance that the group can complete.
 - Consider riding with your kids. You can still push yourself in training, but riding in a shorter ride as a family is a rewarding experience.
- How do you want to feel when the ride is done?
 - The finish of the Tour de Cure can be a celebration. If you want to participate, make sure that you don’t choose a route that has you headed straight home to bed when finished.

If you are considering signing up for the Tour de Cure, a discussion with your doctor might help you decide on an appropriate route, as well as blood sugar management strategies. You will want to discuss preparation for hypoglycemia, especially if you are on insulin or medication that helps your body produce more insulin. As always, you should talk to your doctor before beginning any new exercise program.