

Tips for Teens with Diabetes

Be Active!



Physical activity is good for everyone. Being active is really important if you have diabetes. Check out these ideas on how to be more active.

Being active helps you:
relax, manage weight,
feel better, sleep well,
lower blood sugar,
have more energy,
and be more alert.

Get moving! Find great activity tips ➔



National Diabetes Education Program

A program of the National Institutes of Health and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Get into action and have fun!

What's so important about being physically active?

Being active keeps your body healthy and strong and gives you more energy. It can help you be more alert in school. It can also help you stay at a healthy weight or help you lose weight slowly. **Being active is an important part of a healthy lifestyle.**

Physical activity can make you feel better if you are in a bad mood or stressed out. It can relax you and help you sleep well. It helps your body use blood sugar, also called blood glucose (GLOO-kos) for energy. Physical activity can help keep your blood sugar in a normal range.



What activities can I do?

There are many ways you can be active. Pick things you like to do.

- Take a walk, hike, or ride a bike.
- Skateboard, roller blade, or ice skate.
- Play some music and dance with your friends. If you like video games, try a dance or other active video game.
- Play basketball, baseball, softball, golf, soccer, tennis, volleyball, or your favorite sport.
- Go swimming.
- Lift weights to strengthen your muscles.
- Try yoga, tai chi, karate, or jiu jitsu.



Think of other things you like to do and just move!

Make physical activity a part of your daily life. It is an easy way to have fun. Be active with your friends or family members. It is easier and more fun when you ask someone to join you.

How active should I be?

Any amount of activity will help. Slowly work up to at least 60 minutes every day. **Try a few minutes each day.** Do not get upset if you cannot do a lot or if you get out of breath at first—keep moving. You might find it fun to count your steps with a pedometer (step counter). Add a few more steps each day. Over time, work up to at least 10,000 steps a day.

What should I do before being more active?

Talk to your doctor about the types of physical activity that might work best for you.

- Check your blood sugar before the start and after the end of your activity.
- If you take insulin, make sure your blood sugar does not get too low during or after activity. Always wear a Medical ID bracelet.
- Keep something handy to treat low blood sugar, such as fruit juice, regular soda, glucose tablets or gel.



But I hate to exercise – what can I do?

You do not have to play a sport or go to a gym. There are a lot of things you can do to be more active:

- **Walk fast** around the mall a few times before you start shopping.
- Help your mom or dad **carry** groceries, **clean** the house, cut grass, do **garden** work, rake leaves, or **shovel** snow.
- Take the **stairs** instead of the elevator.
- Take your dog out to **play** or **walk**.
- Ride your **bike** instead of driving or getting a ride from your parents or a friend.
- Do **push-ups**, **sit-ups**, or **jump rope** while watching TV.

play



Make a list of things you like to do to be physically active. Hang it in your room as a reminder. **Keep track of your progress.**

Who can help me be more active?

Ask your **family** members and **friends** to do something fun with you—and work up a sweat. Being active is good for them too and a great way for families to spend time together. Ask your family to take a walk after dinner instead of watching TV. Instead of computer games, play music that the whole family likes and dance!

Start an activity group with your friends. Try a different sport or activity each week, or simply walk home from school together instead of taking the bus.



dance...jog
jump rope...take the stairs...swim
rake leaves...clean the house...walk your dog
ride a bike...play baseball

bike



run

How can I manage my diabetes?

If you have diabetes, you need to be active, make healthy food choices, and stay at or get to a healthy weight. You also need to take your insulin or any other medicines that your doctor tells you to and check your blood sugar as planned with your health care team. **Taking care of your diabetes can help you stay fit, feel great, and give you more energy to have fun.**

Tips for parents

to promote physical activity for teens in their community

- **Talk to school staff** about allowing more activity time for students.
- Ask if you can schedule physical activities such as karate or dance at the school during after-school hours.
- **Involve your family** in active programs like the Y, swim clubs, 4-H, Boy or Girl Scouts, Boys & Girls Clubs, and youth recreation programs.
- **Talk to local leaders** about making safe places for teens to be active.
- **Volunteer** to help create or fix up public playgrounds or sports grounds.



climb

Learn more!

Check out...

National Diabetes Education Program

to get free copies of other materials for teens:

- *What is Diabetes?*
- *Stay at a Healthy Weight*
- *Make Healthy Food Choices*
- *Dealing With the Ups and Downs of Diabetes*
- *Lower Your Risk for Type 2 Diabetes*

Diabetes HealthSense: www.YourDiabetesInfo.org/HealthSense

Helping the Student with Diabetes Succeed: A Guide for School Personnel: www.YourDiabetesInfo.org/SchoolGuide

Transitions from Pediatric to Adult Care:

www.YourDiabetesInfo.org/Transitions

NDEP Schools and Youth Page:

www.YourDiabetesInfo.org/Schools

1-888-693-NDEP (1-888-693-6337)

TTY: 1-866-569-1162

Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics to find a dietitian near you www.eatright.org • 1-800-877-1600

American Association of Diabetes Educators

to find a diabetes educator near you

www.diabeteseducator.org

1-800-338-DMED (1-800-338-3633)

American Diabetes Association for help to manage diabetes www.diabetes.org/living-with-diabetes/parents-and-kids/

1-800-DIABETES (1-800-342-2383)

Bam! Body and Mind website for help to stay healthy www.bam.gov

Children With Diabetes website for more about kids and families with diabetes www.childrenwithdiabetes.com

JDRF for help to manage diabetes www.jdrf.org

1-800-533-CURE (1-800-533-2873)

National Association for Health and Fitness that promotes physical activity www.physicalfitness.org

518-456-1058

National Diabetes Information Clearinghouse for more about diabetes www.diabetes.niddk.nih.gov

1-800-860-8747

Nutrition and Physical Activity

website for healthy eating and physical activity tips

www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpao/publications/index.html

Parks and Recreation Youth Programs where you live. Type the name of your town or city followed by "parks and recreation youth programs" into an online search engine.

President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports for more about physical activity www.fitness.gov

1-240-276-9567

The Y for youth and family activities www.ymca.net

1-800-872-9622

Walkability Checklist to find a friendly place to walk www.walkableamerica.org/checklist-walkability.pdf

WIN – Weight-control Information Network

for weight control help:

- *Take Charge of Your Health! A Teenager's Guide to Better Health*

www.win.niddk.nih.gov/publications/take_charge.htm

1-877-946-4627

Special thanks to the teens who helped create this tip sheet

Francine Kaufman, M.D., Head, Center for Diabetes, Endocrinology and Metabolism at Childrens Hospital Los Angeles and Janet Silverstein, M.D., Professor and Chief, Pediatric Endocrinology, Department of Pediatrics, University of Florida, Gainesville, FL, reviewed this material for technical accuracy.



www.YourDiabetesInfo.org

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' National Diabetes Education Program (NDEP) is jointly sponsored by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) with the support of more than 200 partner organizations.

Revised July 2014 NIH Publication No. 12-5295 NDEP-64