

Be Active! But How?

Being active is a big part of living a healthy lifestyle. This is true for people of all ages and especially true for people with or at risk for pre-diabetes or type 2 diabetes. Check out the benefits of exercise:

Top Ten Benefits of Being Active

1. Improve blood glucose management
2. Lower blood pressure
3. Improve blood fats
4. Take less insulin or diabetes pills
5. Lose weight and keep it off
6. Lower risk for other health problems
7. Gain more energy and sleep better
8. Relieve stress
9. Build stronger bones and muscles
10. Be more flexible

How Much Exercise?

The Federal government's **Dietary Guidelines for Americans** suggest how much activity people should aim for:

- People with pre-diabetes, diabetes, or the general adult public should aim for a minimum of 30 minutes most days. Walking, gardening, doing yard work, swimming, or cleaning house all count toward meeting this goal. Anything that increases your heart rate and causes you to break a light sweat.



- Children & teens should aim for at least 60 minutes most days.

Keep in mind, these are goals, not a starting point. The American Diabetes Association (ADA) supports these Dietary Guidelines and believes they are good advice for people with diabetes or those who want to prevent it.



Research has shown that 150 minutes of exercise a week (30 minutes, five times a week) helped prevent or delay type 2 diabetes. Do these guidelines seem hard to fit in to your busy life? It's not easy to find the time. You won't go from zero to thirty or sixty (minutes), in a day or week. Take one step at a time. Slowly build up to your goal.

Here's how to get started:

- **Talk to your doctor.** Most adults without medical problems don't need their doctor's OK to exercise. But because people with pre-diabetes and diabetes may have heart or other diabetes-related problems, talk to your doctor about your exercise plan.
- **Find a few activities you enjoy.** Make sure these fit into your busy schedule. Perhaps you choose one you can do outside and one inside for when the weather is bad or it's too cold.

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Supported by an unrestricted educational grant from:



03B-600-7000-5



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- **Start slowly.** Set your first goal at three ten minute walks each week. When you reach this goal, increase the number of minutes you walk. Then increase the number of times a week you walk.
- **Find a partner or join an exercise group.** This can help you stay on track and make exercise more fun. Look in your area for a mall or local walking program. Or find an online free group. Visit www.diabetes.org and sign up for ClubPed, our online walking support group and step tracker.
- **Be active in ten minute spurts.** Remember that you don't have to exercise for 30 minutes at a time. It's just as good to exercise 3 times a day for 10 minutes each. This may be easier to fit in to your schedule.
- **Be more active all day.** Think about what you do each day and how you can work in more activity. Can you take the stairs more often instead of an elevator? Can you park further away from where you work, shop, or do errands? You'll be amazed at how these extra minutes and steps add up.

Counting Steps

A pedometer is a small device that clips on your pants or belt. It counts the steps you take by sensing your movement when you walk. Simple pedometers just count steps. Fancier ones measure distance, time, or calories burned. Get a pedometer to track the steps you take each day. A simple inexpensive one is just fine. It will cost between \$10 and \$20 dollars.

Aim to build up to 10,000 steps a day. This is 5 miles. Here's how to start: First, check how many steps you do now. Wear the pedometer for a week or two. Find out

the average steps you take each day. Once you know your starting point, try to up your daily average by 500 steps every couple weeks. Before you know it, you'll hit 10,000 steps a day!

If you have diabetes, keep in mind that you may need to be more careful about safety. You'll want to prevent low blood glucose and damage to your feet. Follow these steps to stay safe:

- Wear diabetes I.D.
- Wear sneakers and socks that fit well and feel good to protect your feet.
- Check your blood glucose before exercise. If it's too low (under 80 mg/dl), eat a piece of fruit, a few crackers, or glass of milk.
- Check your blood glucose after exercise. Learn how your blood glucose reacts to becoming more active. If you take diabetes medicines and your blood glucose often gets too low, ask your doctor about lowering your doses.
- Carry a snack to eat if you'll be active for a few hours.
- Learn more about safe exercising for people with diabetes on our Web site at www.diabetes.org



On your mark...get set...be active!

Supported by an unrestricted
educational grant from:
 **Abbott Laboratories**
Abbott Park, IL 60064
03B-600-7000-5

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