



TYPE 1 DIABETES and EXERCISE

PATIENT/FAMILY INFORMATION SHEET

What can I do to exercise safely?

During exercise, blood glucose is lowered as glucose is used to fuel the body for the activity. Although this is a positive benefit of exercise, precautions must be taken to prevent hypoglycemia.

- Wear and carry identification stating that you have type 1 diabetes.
- Bring your glucose meter to the gym to monitor your blood glucose level.
- Carry a fast-acting carbohydrate with you, such as glucose tablets, gel or liquid.
- Exercise with a partner or let a friend/family member know where you will be exercising and the time you expect to return home.
- Bring a cell phone and money for a snack and a telephone call if you do not have a cell phone.
- Pack a snack and bring it with you if you know or are concerned that your blood glucose will go too low after exercise.
- Avoid exercising late in the evening as this may increase the risk of low blood glucose (hypoglycemia) during the night.
- Avoid exercising during the time you anticipate your insulin will be peaking or working its hardest.
- Be aware of the early signs and symptoms of low blood glucose.
- If you use insulin, use an injection site on your abdomen rather than a limb that will be used during exercise.
- Check your feet for blisters or sores after exercising.
- Discuss with your physician the need for adjusting your insulin dose on days you will be exercising.
- Remember that the blood glucose lowering effect of exercise can last up to 48 hours which increases the chance of having hypoglycemia.



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Are there times when I should postpone exercise?

Exercise should be postponed in the following situations:

- Blood glucose is too high (more than 250 mg/dl; (check urine for ketones*).
- Blood glucose is low (less than 100 mg/dl). Have a snack and check blood glucose prior to exercising.
- The weather is too hot or too cold.
- You are undergoing treatment for active retinal hemorrhage or retinopathy.

*** If urine ketones are small or greater, call your physician immediately.**

How often should I exercise?

Before beginning an exercise program, discuss with your physician how much and how often to exercise. The American College of Sports Medicine guideline is to complete moderate exercise at least 3 to 4 days each week for 20 minutes, gradually increasing to 60 minutes. An exercise program must be tailored to your individual ability and any additional conditions or complications you may have. An Exercise Physiologist can help you tailor a program to meet your needs. Physical activity improves blood glucose levels and increases the body's sensitivity to insulin during exercise and for up to 48 hours afterwards. The exercise session should be stopped if you feel any symptoms, such as fatigue, lightheadedness, chest pain, shortness of breath, or any other unusual feelings.

Where can I learn more about exercise and diabetes?

If you have questions you may contact any of the following resources:

Organization	Phone
Greenwich Hospital Weight Loss & Diabetes Center	203.863.2939
Greenwich Hospital Diabetes Education Specialist	203.863.3929
Greenwich Hospital Sackler Medical Library/Consumer Health	203.863.3285
American Diabetes Association	800.232.3472
Web Resources	
<input type="checkbox"/> American Diabetes Association:	www.diabetes.org
<input type="checkbox"/> American College of Sports Medicine:	www.acsm.org

For more Patient Education Fact Sheets, see the Greenwich Hospital web site at www.greenwichhospital.org and click Patient Education