

Exercise

It's important to be active. Exercise is a key factor to success when managing diabetes and pregnancy. Exercise is vital for everyone. Choose exercise that is fun. The benefits of exercise are as follow:

BENEFITS OF EXERCISE

Lowers blood sugars	Improves the body's ability to use glucose and insulin
Decreases the risk of heart disease	Lowers cholesterol and blood pressure
Decreases the risk of kidney damage	Decreases the risk of blindness
Reduces stress	Improves self-esteem
Decreases feeling tired	More energy
Better sleep	Relieves constipation

Please talk to your doctor before you exercise to help decide what is best for you. This is key for a pregnant woman with diabetes because problems may develop. Exercise should be at the same time every day, 30 minutes a day most days of the week, preferably after a meal.

The activity you choose depends of your fitness level and how much you exercised before you became pregnant. If you did not exercise on a regular basis, this is not the time to begin a strenuous program. There are many activities that you can do safely, such as walking, swimming and/or light aerobics. You may find a new activity that you will enjoy well beyond pregnancy.

Exercise – special considerations and safety measures:

Low blood sugar (hypoglycemia) can be a side effect of exercise if you take insulin or other medicine for diabetes. Check your blood sugar before and after exercise. Patients on an insulin pump can pause their basal rate for exercise as needed for low blood sugars.

If you begin to feel dizzy, very tired, short of breath, a fast heartbeat, and pain or decreased fetal movement, **STOP at once.** Check your blood sugar. If low, treat with a fast-acting carbohydrate such as glucose tablets.

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND BLOOD SUGARS

Blood Sugars	What to consider before exercise
Greater than 240	Do exercise along with possible medication adjustment
Between 120-240	Do not eat before exercise
Less than 100	Eat 15 grams of carbohydrates snack (1 bread or 1 fruit) before exercise
Less than 60	Treat for low blood sugar. You may begin physical activity after blood sugar is greater than 100
	If you are taking insulin, avoid exercise during the insulin's peak time
	Carry a fast-acting sugar source (glucose tabs, hard candy) to treat low blood sugar
	Exercise with others and stop if you feel uterine contractions
	If you wear an insulin pump, you may need to pause or suspend your basal rate while exercising

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Other recommendations:

Wear medical identification, socks that absorb moisture and shoes that fit well and check feet for injury. Inspect feet after exercise. Be sure to drink plenty of water or sugar-free liquids to avoid dehydration.