

### Exercise Vital in the Treatment and Prevention of Diabetes

This month, take time out to learn more about diabetes and a condition known as pre-diabetes, which can flag raised blood sugar levels that increase the likelihood for the development of type 2 diabetes and heart disease. Once correlation that has emerged: the rise of adult-onset (type 2) diabetes parallels the higher levels of obesity occurring in the United States in the past 20 years. To find out more, visit [www.diabetes.org](http://www.diabetes.org).

Type 2 diabetes occurs when the body cannot maintain blood sugar levels. Often, the disease can be controlled by weight loss, exercise and improved nutrition. Studies now show that type 2 diabetics who do not exercise are more likely to develop severe health issues before more active, fit diabetics. Regular exercise improves the control of blood sugar, lowers blood pressure, promotes weight loss and lowers cholesterol levels. Consequently, not only does exercise improve the body's defenses against the onset and/or advancement of diabetes, but it also aids in fighting heart disease.

Experts recommend eating something before any activity to keep blood sugar levels in check. Never exercise on an empty stomach because the activity will cause the body's sugar levels to drop. A diabetic should always check his/her level before working out. If it is low, it is advisable to have a snack and wait 20 to 30 minutes before exercising. A small glass of juice is usually enough prior to moderate exercise, like walking, bicycling or golfing. More rigorous activity - jogging or tennis, for example - will require more than a light snack. Half a turkey sandwich and a cup of low-fat milk are recommended.

### Little Changes Make a Big Difference

Observing proper nutrition can be made easier and can last longer if we make little changes in our eating habits, one at a time. For example, post a copy of the newest food pyramid on the refrigerator. This provides a regular reminder of the increased quantities of fruits and vegetables necessary to maintain a healthy diet.

Next, make a conscious effort to spend more time in the produce section of the supermarket to stock up on these healthy food selections. Better yet, make it a habit to visit a farmer's market to focus solely on fresh foods. Offer and/or pack healthy snacks for family members such as carrot sticks, celery, bell pepper strips, cherry tomatoes, grapes, pea pods, berries and cherries, when in season. High fiber foods such as these, along with whole grains and beans, are loaded with vitamins and minerals, with the least concentrated sources of calories.

Practice moderation with sugary sweets, as well as high-sodium foods such as processed meats, canned soups, prepared foods and pickles. Watch out for foods with too much saturated fat and dietary cholesterol, which can contribute to clogged and narrowed arteries. Remember: diabetics must be especially aware of these foods, as they are at an even greater risk for developing heart disease.

For support and to find out exactly how much of what types of foods to eat, consider working with a registered dietician. Call the American Dietetic Association at 1-800-366-1655 and ask for the names of the dietitians in your area. If you are diabetic or have a household member who is, ask about a dietician who specializes in diabetes.



### Commit to a Lifestyle Change!

**Find new ways to keep moving every day.**

**Work out at the club several days a week.**

**Take a walk after lunch or dinner.**

**Park at the far end of the parking lot.**

**Take a dancing, step or yoga class.**

**Use the stairs instead of the escalator at the mall.**

**Ride a stationary bike while watching the news.**