

patient education program

8200 Dodge Street Omaha, NE 68114-4113 402-955-5400 ChildrensOmaha.org

Diabetes & Exercise

Exercise helps to lower blood sugars by making the body use insulin better. Because exercise can raise or lower the blood sugar, the goal is to keep the blood sugar over 120 mg/dL before and during exercise.

How to Exercise Safely:

- People with diabetes should check their blood sugar before exercise. Checking the blood sugar tells you if the blood sugar is high enough to safely exercise. Follow the steps below.
- Be aware, that extra activity may cause a low blood sugar even if you've taken steps to prevent it. Blood sugars may drop during the activity, right after the activity, or up to 24 hours after the activity. **You should test a blood sugar at midnight and 3 AM**, especially when starting a new activity or if you/your child exercised more than normal. Follow the steps on our nighttime low blood sugar (hypoglycemia) teaching sheet.

Follow these Steps:

1. Check blood sugar before the activity, at least every hour during the activity, and after the activity.
2. If before or during the activity the blood sugar is **less than 70** mg/dL, follow the low blood sugar treatment steps (hypoglycemia teaching sheet). **Physical activity must stop until blood sugar is over 70.** Once the blood sugar is over 70, give an extra 15 grams of carbohydrate (liquid or solid) and do the activity.
3. If before or during the activity the blood sugar is **between 70 and 120** mg/dL, take 15 grams of carbohydrate and do the activity. You do not need to wait until the blood sugar is over 120 mg/dL.
4. If the blood sugar is over 240, check for ketones and drink water.
5. **DO NOT EXERCISE IF: There are ketones in the urine/blood, sick** (Sick enough to stay home from school), or **blood sugar is over 400.**
6. Drinking plenty of water is important for all athletes. The blood sugar will tell you if you/your child should drink sugared or non-sugared fluids.
7. If extra snacks aren't enough to keep blood sugar up, try taking less insulin at the meal closest to the activity. You can call the diabetes team for help in figuring this out.

Please note that the carbohydrates in these guidelines are **in addition to** any regularly scheduled snack.

REMEMBER, these guidelines give you a starting point for insulin and food adjustments when preparing for activities. Over time, you will be able to learn how your/your child's body reacts to exercise.