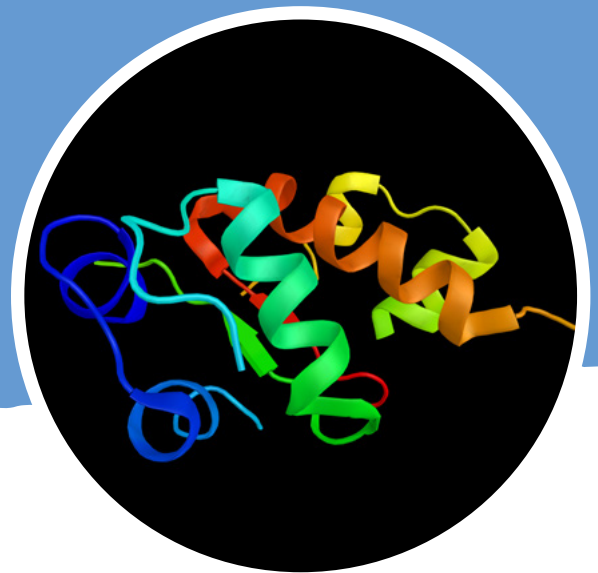


Physical Activity and Diabetes

If you have diabetes, this factsheet is for you.

Use the information in this factsheet with the booklet *Get Active Your Way*. Order your free copy on www.healthpromotion.ie



What is diabetes?

Diabetes is a disorder caused by a lack of insulin. Insulin is a hormone which keeps your blood sugar levels within a healthy range.

- **Type 1 diabetes**

This type usually occurs before the age of 35. If you have Type 1 diabetes, your body doesn't make insulin and you have to inject insulin to regulate your blood sugar levels.

- **Type 2 diabetes**

This type of diabetes is also known as adult onset diabetes, as it commonly occurs in adults after the age of 40. If you have Type 2 diabetes, your body can make some insulin. This type of diabetes is usually associated with being overweight, getting older, lack of physical exercise and a family history of diabetes.

How can regular physical activity help?

Physical activity will help you:

- control your blood sugar levels
- lower your blood pressure
- lose weight and maintain a healthy weight
- improve your circulation

As a person with diabetes, below are some key guidelines to follow when being active:

- Check to make sure that your doctor is happy for you to do whatever new activity you are planning and begin slowly
- Drink more after a long exercise session, especially if you take diabetic medicines
- Tell others you exercise with (your coach or team mates) that you have diabetes, what the symptoms are when you have low blood sugar and what they should do if you need their help
- Wear proper footwear and check your feet for blisters or sores before and after physical activity
- Stop exercising if you feel shaky, anxious or begin to sweat more than normal. This could mean that your blood sugar is too low (this is a condition called hypoglycaemia)

How do I get started?



Use the booklet *Get Active Your Way* to help you make a plan to become more active.

It is recommended to check with your GP before you start becoming more active. They can help you set realistic goals that take account of your level of fitness, symptoms and medication.

To get the most health benefits from physical activity, you need to be physically active at a moderate intensity for at least 30 minutes a day on five days a week (or for 150 minutes a week).



Important

Test your blood sugar after physical activity. If it is normal or low, you should eat some food. Remember that hypoglycaemia can develop several hours after a hard exercise session if you are taking some kinds of diabetes medicine.

If you are not regularly active or are very overweight, start with bouts of ten minutes or less of exercise every day. You can then gradually increase the amount of time you are active.

Useful contacts

www.diabetes.ie

www.getirelandactive.ie