

Video transcript: Diabetes Getting Active

Approximate time: 6:21

Welcome to the UnitedHealthcare Diabetes Education Online Seminar. This seminar is called “Getting active for better health.”

[Slide: What to expect]

Whether you or a family member has just been diagnosed or have been living with type 1 or type 2 diabetes for years, you probably know that along with taking prescribed medications and eating right, staying active can help you manage your condition and your health.

Today we’ll give you some information to help you understand the benefits of exercise, guidelines to follow, what to discuss with your doctor and how to get ready to stay active safely.

[Slide: Benefits of exercise]

Getting plenty of exercise can benefit your health and help you manage diabetes. It can play a valuable role in managing the disease progression and can reduce the risk of complications too.

Staying active can help lower blood glucose and improve your A1C. It can help prevent high blood pressure and lower your cholesterol levels, improve your body’s ability to use insulin, help you lose weight or stay at a healthy weight, improve your mood, keep your heart strong, strengthen your muscles and bones, help you stay flexible and help you sleep better.

[Slide: Exercise guidelines]

Most adults with type 1 or type 2 diabetes should get at least 150 minutes of moderate to vigorous intensity aerobic exercise each week. Brisk walking, biking leisurely and mowing the lawn are examples of moderate-intensity aerobic activity. When you’re doing this type of activity, you should be able to talk, but not carry a tune.

Types of vigorous-intensity exercises are jogging, singles tennis or heavy gardening. When you do this type, you won’t be able to talk more than a couple of words at a time without taking a breath.

For both types of exercises, try to spread your activity over at least 3 days, without missing more than 2 days in a row. And keep in mind that activity can be done in as little as 10 minutes at a time.

[Slide: Exercise guidelines]

Physical activity guidelines also include doing resistance or strength training at least twice a week, if you don't have other diabetes complications that may limit your ability to participate. This may be as simple as lifting light weights or using a resistance band. Strengthening exercises help improve muscle and bone strength.

Improving flexibility and balance are also important as this type of activity may help prevent falls and improve your range of motion. Exercises such as yoga and tai chi are recommended for older adults 2 to 3 times per week, but may be part of any diabetes exercise plan.

And everyone, including people who have diabetes, should limit sedentary time to no more than 30 minutes at a time. Try standing or walking around for a few minutes to break up the time and stay healthy.

[Slide: Talk with your doctor]

Having a plan for exercise is important when you have diabetes. Before you start an exercise program or increase your activity level, check with your doctor to find out how much and what types of activities are safe for you. This is especially important if you have complications of diabetes.

Ask your doctor about your safe range of blood sugar levels. If you're taking insulin, your doctor may want you to adjust your insulin and test your blood glucose before, during and after you exercise. And you'll want to know how to treat it if it's too low, which is called hypoglycemia, or too high, which is called or referred to, hyperglycemia.

[Slide: Get ready, get set, be safe]

Once you have an exercise plan, follow these tips to help you stay safe.

Warm up for 5 minutes before you exercise and cool down for 5 minutes afterward.

If it's been a while since you've been active, start slowly by working out for 5 to 10 minutes each day and gradually increase the amount of time and intensity each week, toward a goal of 30 minutes a day.

Stay hydrated. Drink water before, during and after your workout.

Take special care of your feet too. If you develop any sores or blisters, call your doctor. Wear comfortable shoes that fit, wear socks that keep moisture away from your feet and be sure to wear a medical identification bracelet or necklace so people will know you have diabetes in case of an emergency.

[Slide: Find activities you enjoy!]

First, choose activities you enjoy. Try walking around your neighborhood or at a park or try an exercise class. It can get you motivated, plus you can meet old friends and new ones.

Aquatic exercise is another good activity to help add buoyancy and reduce stress on the joints.

And yoga covers three types of exercise: strength, balance and flexibility.

Working around the house is great too. Try cleaning, raking or mowing the lawn - anything that gets you moving.

And lifting weights can help build strength. Try using handheld or ankle weights.

[Slide: Summary]

However you choose to build activity into your life, make it part of your everyday routine.

Be sure you talk to your doctor before starting an exercise program. And take precautions to stay active safely.

As you get more physically fit, you'll gradually build endurance over time.

Have fun and enjoy staying fit for your long-term health.

Thank you for watching "Getting active for better health." We hope you found this information helpful.