

# Exercise and Diabetes



Exercise is the best therapy for diabetes. Exercise can help you:

- Keep your blood sugar in your target range
- Maintain a healthy weight
- Have more energy
- Lower your stress

## Plan for Exercise

- Check with your doctor before you start an exercise program.
- Walking, swimming, biking, dancing or aerobics are good ways to exercise.
- Choose activities you enjoy.
- Decide when you will exercise and write it on your calendar.
- Protect your feet. Wear cotton socks and make sure your shoes are a good fit.

### Your Exercise Program

- When?** The best time to exercise is 1 to 1½ hours after a meal. Check your blood sugar before you begin to exercise.
- If it is low (under 120mg/dl), have a snack with starch in it before you start.
  - If your blood sugar is high (over 300 mg/dl), wait to exercise. Exercise may cause it to go even higher.
- How much?** Aim for 20 minutes a day on 4 to 5 days a week. Start with 5 minutes and work up to a longer time. Include warm-up and cool-down time. If you feel worse when you finish exercising than before you started, you have done too much. Scale back next time.
- How hard?** You should be able to talk while you exercise. Ask your doctor what your target heart rate should be.