

## PATIENT INFORMATION

### Getting started with exercise and diabetes



Being active is an important part of a healthy lifestyle. Sometimes being more active can make blood glucose levels more difficult to manage. To know how exercise affects blood glucose levels, checks during exercise/activity are needed. During exercise/activity, muscles use more glucose for energy. This means that blood glucose levels may fall. You want blood glucose levels to be about 6-8mmol/L during your exercise. Reduce insulin doses or have extra exercise snacks to keep blood glucose levels stable.

Here are some simple steps to follow when being active:

- Check your blood glucose level before any activity. If it is below 5.5mmol/L have a 10-15g snack before the start.
- If exercise lasts longer than 30 minutes and is less than 2 hours after a meal and insulin, an 'exercise snack' may be needed. Have 10-15g of carbohydrate for every 30 minutes of activity.
- When exercise is planned, reduce the insulin dose with the meal 1-2 hours before exercise by 50%.
- If exercise is more than 2 hours after a meal with insulin, just have 10-15g of carbohydrate for each 30 minutes of exercise if needed.
- If exercise does not last for 30 minutes then no changes may be needed.
- Always check blood glucose levels before, during (every 20-40 minutes) and after exercise. This will help you to understand how exercise affects blood glucose levels.
- For matches or competitions over a meal time, have something to eat about 1-2 hours before the competition and eat again at the end of the match.
- Check blood glucose levels after exercise, if your blood glucose level is between 7 and 14mmol/L do not give a correction. If blood glucose levels are more than 14mmol/L use a ½ correction dose.

**15g carbohydrate exercise snacks**

Piece of fruit or portion of dried fruit  
2 Jaffa cakes  
1 breakfast cereal bar which contains 15g carbohydrate  
20g sweets eg jelly beans/fruit pastilles  
  
125ml fruit juice mixed with 125ml water  
250ml sports drink

Contact the dietitian or diabetes nurses for advice about low or high blood glucose levels during exercise/activity.

*Adapted from information provided by the Department Nutrition & Dietetics, Alder Hey Children's NHS Foundation Trust*