

## **Physical Activity**

### **Do something. Motion is Lotion**

Physical activity is an important part of being healthy. It is especially important for people with diabetes. It can reduce stress, increase your energy, make you feel better and make all your diabetes medicines work better. When you engage in physical activity, movement becomes easier and your muscles are strengthened. It's also a good way to help control your blood pressure and blood fats (lipids). Just move—do any type of motion and you will provide lotion for your joints, heart, brain and all parts of your body.

### **Getting started**

- Look for an activity you enjoy. There are a lot of possibilities such as walking, swimming, bike riding, dancing, bowling, roller skating, and gardening. You are much more likely to stick with an activity that makes you smile.
- Make sure it's right for your current level of fitness. If you've been doing very little, even a very small amount will give you results. At every level of fitness, you make progress by doing just a little more.
- Walking may be a good way to get started. It is convenient and low in cost. All you need to get started are cotton socks and a pair of supportive shoes that fit well.
- **Chair exercises**—if it is difficult to walk sit in a chair and move your arms and legs to your favorite music. You may want to put a can of food in a sock and use it for a weight to increase the resistance to your arm movement

### **Create a physical activity plan**

Any increase in activity is likely to make you feel better. You may not need or want to do anything more than taking a walk after supper. To get all the benefits from physical activity, though, you will need to do more. Maybe not at first, but eventually. Your physical activity will need to:

- Happen at least a few times a week. Every day is best.
- Add up to at least 30 minutes a day.
- Be hard enough to make you break a light sweat (moderate intensity).
- Include activities that move large muscles in your legs and arms. .

- Do a little stretching before you start and at the end. Include a warm up (start slow) and a cool down (stop over a few minutes time) to avoid injury.
- A tight muscle is a weak muscle—stretch leg muscles every day
- Do some weight lifting three times a week—use light weights of 3 to 5 pounds—this helps decrease chance of broken bones and combined with other activity lowers blood sugar.
- Start slowly. Five or ten minutes a day is a good beginning if you have been inactive.
- Wear comfortable, supportive shoes and cotton socks. Check your feet after physical activity for any signs of poor shoe fit or injury.
- Drink plenty of water before, during and after exercise

### **How to keep going:**

- Make your activity a part of your daily routine.
- Finding someone to do physical activity with can help make your workout more enjoyable. When physical activity is enjoyable and social, it is its own reward.
- Tell yourself every day why you are active. Maybe you are exercising to feel better, lower your blood sugars, or lose weight. Whatever it is, keep track of how you are doing.
- Everyone's physical activity plans lapse occasionally. This is normal—just start back up again and remind yourself of **WHY** you are being active.