

A few hints

- Some pregnant women should not exercise for various reasons, so check with your doctor or midwife before commencing any exercise programme.
- If you have not exercised for a while, start at a low level and build up gradually.
- Exercise with a friend - it is more enjoyable and you can help motivate each other.
- Avoid becoming overheated during exercise - exercise at the coolest time of the day, either early in the morning, evening or in a cool environment.
- Drink plenty of fluids before, during and after exercising.
- Monitor your blood glucose levels as usual and when starting a new activity; test before and after to see your body's response.
- Physiotherapists conduct exercise classes which are suitable for pregnant women - for more information ring the Australian Physiotherapy Association on (08) 9389 9211 or King Edward Memorial Hospital on (08) 9340 2790.

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Delivering a Healthy WA

Exercise, Diabetes and Pregnancy



Exercise plays an important role in good health for everyone. For people with diabetes, regular exercise has extra benefits as it can help with blood glucose control. This is also true for pregnant women with diabetes as they need to be extra careful with their blood sugar control in order to prevent complications for mother and baby.

What are the benefits of exercise?

- Helps to lower blood glucose levels.
- Assists in preventing excess weight gain.
- Improves blood flow to all parts of the body.
- Helps to lower blood pressure and cholesterol levels.
- Reduces stress, improves energy levels and makes you feel good.
- Helps you to sleep better.



What sort of exercise should I do?

- Remember any physical activity is exercise.
- Choose an activity that you enjoy and that fits in well with your lifestyle.
- Try to vary your activities so that you stay motivated.
- Suitable activities during pregnancy include walking, swimming, walking in a pool, stationary bicycles (not "cycling").
- You will gain the maximum benefits from exercise by exercising three - five times a week for 30 minutes each time, at a pace which makes you puff slightly; the best idea is to exercise everyday.
- To avoid injury, your exercise programme should also include five to ten minutes of warm-up and stretches and five to ten minutes of slow activity at the end to cool down.

Tips for exercising safely

- Avoid activities that involve balance as it increases the risk of falling (tennis, cycling, basketball, volleyball etc).
- Avoid exercise when lying on your back after the first 16 weeks of pregnancy as it can make you feel faint.
- Avoid administering insulin in an area that will be exercised as it can affect the absorption time.
- Carry out blood glucose monitoring before the activity.



- Do not exercise if your blood glucose level is over 15mmol/L.
- Check glucose levels before, during and after the exercise.
- Have a carbohydrate snack before, during and after prolonged exercise, drink plenty of water.
- Reduce the dose of insulin or eat more carbohydrate (30 minutes of exercise for every 10 to 15g) when exercising.
- Be aware when the action of your insulin peaks and avoid exercise.
- When on insulin, you should always carry some form of glucose for potential episodes of hypoglycaemia.
- Avoid exercise of elevated intensity and of long duration (more than 60 minutes).