Diabetes and Exercise

Regular exercise is important and can help:

- Control blood glucose (*sugar*).
- Decrease blood pressure.
- Control blood lipids (*cholesterol* and *triglycerides*).
- Improve overall health.

BENEFITS FROM EXERCISE:

- Improved fitness.
- Improved flexibility.
- Improved endurance.
- Increased bone density.
- Weight control.
- Increased muscle strength.
- Decreased body fat.
- Improvement of the body's use of a hormone called insulin.
  - Increased insulin sensitivity.
  - Reduction of insulin needs.
- Helps you feel better.
- Reduces stress and tension.

People with diabetes who add exercise to their lifestyle gain additional benefits.

- Weight loss.
- Reduces appetite.
- Improves body's use of blood glucose (*sugar*).
- Decreases risk factors for heart disease:
  - Lowering of cholesterol and triglycerides.
  - Raising the level of good cholesterol (*high-density lipoproteins* [HDL]).
  - Lowering blood sugar.
- Decreases blood pressure.

TYPE 1 DIABETES AND EXERCISE

- Exercise will usually lower your blood glucose.
- If blood glucose is greater than 240 mg/dl, check urine ketones. If ketones are present, **do not exercise.**
- Location of the insulin injection sites may need to be adjusted with exercise. Avoid injecting insulin into areas of the body that will be exercised. For example, avoid injecting insulin into:
  - The arms when playing tennis.
  - The legs when jogging. For more information, discuss this with your caregiver.
- Keep a record of:
  - Food intake.
  - Type and amount of exercise.
  - Expected peak times of insulin action.
  - Blood glucose (*sugar*) levels.

Do this before, during and after exercise. Review your records with your caregiver(s). This will help you to develop guidelines for adjusting food intake and/or insulin amounts.

TYPE 2 DIABETES AND EXERCISE

- Regular physical activity can help control blood glucose.
- Exercise is important because it may:

- Increase the body's sensitivity to insulin.
- Improve blood glucose control.

- Exercise reduces the risk of heart disease. It decreases serum cholesterol and triglycerides. It also lowers blood pressure.
- Those who take insulin or oral hypoglycemic agents should watch for signs of hypoglycemia. These signs include dizziness, shaking, sweating, chills and confusion.
- Body water is lost during exercise. It must be replaced. This will help to avoid loss of body fluids (*dehydration*) and/or heat stroke.

Be sure to talk to your caregiver before starting an exercise program to make sure it is safe for you. Remember, any activity is better than none.

Document Released: 03/09/2005 Document Re-Released: 10/15/2010
ExitCare® Patient Information ©2011 ExitCare, LLC.