



Safety Tips for Participation with Diabetes or High Blood Pressure

Almost everyone is able to enjoy the benefits of being more physically active at a low to moderate level, however some people with certain health conditions must be extra careful to make sure that their physical activity program will be fun and safe.

If you **have high blood pressure or diabetes**, there are some things that you need to know before beginning the *8 Steps to Fitness* program.

- Keep in contact with your healthcare provider, and let them know that you are starting a physical activity program.
- Avoid exercising in the extreme heat, humidity, and cold.
- Carry identification that says you have diabetes if you are active away from home.
- Drink plenty of fluids before, during, and after your physical activity.
- Don't participate in vigorous intensity activities such as jogging. Stick to more low and moderate intensity activities, such as brisk walking.
- Be aware of any unusual symptoms with physical activity, and inform your healthcare provider about them: bad headaches, dizziness, or lightheadedness.
- Don't push yourself beyond your comfort level. Work at your own pace.

For People with Diabetes

- Be aware of the timing of your meals with your physical activity. The best time to be active is 1 hour after a meal. Try to do your physical activity the same time every day.
- You should always have a high carbohydrate snack with you, just in case your blood sugar drops too low. Try: hard candies, fruit juice, regular (not diet) soda, milk, or peanut butter and crackers.
- Avoid physical activity in the evening. The combination of activity and not eating through the night can cause your blood sugar to drop too low.
- Always wear the proper footwear when being physically active. Make sure that your shoes are sturdy and supportive, and your socks are cotton, lightweight and breathable. Check your feet for blisters, cuts, and scrapes after your activity session.

For People with High Blood Pressure

- Try not to be physically active immediately after taking your blood pressure medication.
- Drink plenty of fluids, especially if you are taking a "water-pill" (diuretic). You can become dehydrated quickly when taking blood pressure medications, so it is important to drink fluids, even if you're not thirsty.
- Don't hold your breath while you are exercising, or lifting and pushing heavy objects.

Following these simple tips can ensure that you will get the most benefits from being physically active, and stay safe.

