myHealth CONNECTIONS
PROMOTING HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

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Wellness Wednesdays

JULY, 2025 WEEK 2

TAKE IT OUTSIDE WITH FITNESS AND NUTRITION: Move More, Stay Safe

Staying active is one of the best ways to support diabetes management — whether you are just getting started or are already on the move! Physical activity helps the body use insulin better, improves blood sugar levels, and boosts energy. Especially, during hot summer days, it is critically important to adjust routines to ensure safety!

Walking your dog, gardening, or heading to the park for a game – whichever your chosen activity to enjoy the outdoors, always keep your diabetes in mind while staying active and having fun.

Smart Tips for Exercising in the Heat

Hot weather makes it harder to manage diabetes due to the increased risk of dehydration or hypoglycemia, commonly referred to as low blood sugar. Suggestions for maximizing healthy during an active summer:

- **Monitor blood sugar levels** before, during, and after exercise. Heat and physical activity can lower levels quickly, even hours later.
- **Drink plenty of water.** Staying hydrated helps you avoid high blood sugar, especially when sweating more than usual.
- **Carry a fast-acting snack** like glucose tablets, fruit juice, or a small granola bar in case your blood sugar drops. Ask your doctor for diabetes-friendly snack ideas and products.
- **Wear breathable clothing and sunscreen** to avoid skin irritation and sunburn.
- **Avoid peak heat hours.** Plan activities in the early morning or evening when temperatures are cooler.
- **Never go out alone** when trying a new workout or haven't been active in a while. A walking buddy or workout partner is a good idea.

If you are on insulin or medications that increase insulin levels, consult with your doctor about adjusting medication before exercising in hot weather.

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Be Mindful with Summer Meals

Barbecues, ice cream, cold drinks, oh my! Summer comes with seasonal favorites that can be hard to resist. However, no need to miss out completely. Incorporate small changes to help you stay on track and maintain progress.

Tips for enjoying food without spiking glucose levels:

- **Build a balanced plate** with vegetables, lean protein, and whole grains before adding extra portions or simple carbohydrates.
- **Eat slowly and pay attention** to how your body feels. It may take time for satiety to occur (fullness signals to register).
- **Use the "half rule":** fill half your plate with non-starchy vegetables like cucumbers, bell peppers, or salad greens.
- **Choose water or unsweetened iced tea** instead of sugary drinks. Add lemon, mint, or frozen berries for flavor.
- **Stick to your meal schedule** as much as possible to avoid blood sugar swings.

CLICK OR TAP! **There's more where that came from!** Check out our post about mindful eating with diabetes on BCBSIL Connect for more ideas.

Portable Snack Ideas for Busy Days

Running errands or spending the day outdoors? Healthy snacks help prevent low blood sugar levels and control cravings. Try these diabetes-friendly options:

- Handful of mixed nuts and seeds
- Apple slices with peanut butter
- Low-fat string cheese and whole-grain crackers
- Greek yogurt with a dash of cinnamon
- Hard-boiled eggs and veggie sticks

Stay Ahead with Support

Diabetes doesn't take a vacation, even during the most active months of the year. With simple strategies and support from CLICK OR TAP! Blue Cross Blue Shield Illinois Resources, you can feel strong, safe, and in control. Use your benefits to connect with:

- Diabetes education programs
- Nutrition counseling
- Condition management tools
- Virtual visits with a provider or care team

Thriving with diabetes means listening to your body, proper meal and activity planning, and finding joy in daily movement and meals that make you feel good. Incorporating the tips and suggestions in this week's installment will help you enjoy summer as a season of progress, not setbacks.

Keep cool, stay active, and enjoy everything this season has to offer, with your health in mind.

Looking for something more satisfying? Try this recipe!

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 can (15 oz) chickpeas (garbanzo beans), rinsed and drained
- 1 cup cherry tomatoes, halved
- 1 cucumber, chopped
- ¼ red onion, thinly sliced
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice
- Salt and pepper to taste

INSTRUCTIONS:

Mix ingredients in a large bowl and chill before serving. High in fiber and protein, this salad helps keep your blood sugar steady while keeping you full.

SOURCES: *American Diabetes Association*, *CDC*, *PSRI Hospital*

Share this article with your colleagues so they too can exercise safely this summer!