



Children, regardless if they have type 1 diabetes, need to be active. Teaching the importance of exercise and physical activity early on will form healthy habits that will serve your child well into adulthood. But physical activity also impacts blood glucose (blood sugar) levels, and as a parent, you need to know how to respond to these changes.

This article explains how to incorporate physical activity into your child's routine and keep his or her blood glucose level within a stable range.

For people with diabetes, being active provides a slew of important health benefits. These include lowering blood glucose levels and improving your body's ability to use insulin.

In essence, exercise helps your child control his or her diabetes. In the long run, this will reduce the chances of your child experiencing certain health problems related to diabetes.

## Activities for Your Child with Type I Diabetes

Being active is most beneficial when it is done on a regular basis. That is why you should find out what activities interest your child the most. If your child actually enjoys the activity, then it greatly increases the odds that he or she will continue to participate. If your child is interested in sports, then sign him or her up for games. But do not worry if your child does not want to participate in an organised activity. Encourage your child to play outside with friends, ride a bike, or walk the dog.

Also, take advantage of the many opportunities you have each day to set a good example for your child. Take the stairs instead of the elevator. If you live a short distance to shops, then opt not to drive and walk with your child instead. Go on a walk together after dinner. Although they aren't intense bouts of exercise, these activities will help form healthy habits that make a difference.

The ultimate goal is to get your child moving. A good guideline to follow is that your child should get one hour of physical activity in each day. That might sound like a lot, but remember, it does not have to be strenuous activity.



Source: <https://www.endocrineweb.com/guides/type-1-children/physical-activity-children-type-1-diabetes>

## Blood Glucose & Physical Activity

Physical activity can cause blood glucose to drop. If your child's blood glucose level falls too low, it can cause hypoglycaemia.

Here are a few ways you can help reduce the effect of physical activity on your child's blood glucose level:

- Give your child extra carbohydrates, e.g. sports drinks that contain sugar and electrolytes such as sodium and potassium, before the activity.
- Check your child's blood glucose level before, during, and after the activity.
- Prepare a kit that contains snacks, glucose tablets, fruit juice, water, and any medications that your doctor recommends for your child to take to practices and games.
- Be sure to check blood sugar levels more frequently after the activity and overnight to assess if insulin doses need to be adjusted.

If your child is in organised sports, make sure the coach knows that he or she has diabetes. Explain to the coach how to respond if there is a problem related to your child's condition.

Also, your child should wear a medical identification bracelet that alerts others to your child's diabetes, should an emergency occur. Your child should wear this bracelet at all times, not just during exercise and physical activity.

Though there are precautions you need to take, it is important that your child engages in regular physical activity when he or she has type I diabetes. The benefits greatly outweigh the risks, so do not be afraid to encourage your child to exercise and be physically active. With the proper preparation, your child can fully enjoy the same activities as every other child.