

## Exercise & Diabetes Newspaper Article

Diabetes Mellitus affects 11.3 percent of Singaporeans, according to the Ministry of Health. However, the number of diabetics in Singapore is predicted to increase to 15 percent by 2050, thus increasing the need for prevention<sup>2</sup>.

Diabetes is a chronic disease in which blood sugar is too high, associated with many other complications, such as heart disease, stroke, high blood pressure, and amputations. The release of a hormone called insulin, which is responsible for taking up sugar from the blood, is impaired in type 2 diabetes, resulting in high blood sugar levels.

Individuals with type 2 diabetes are well-accustomed to relying on insulin and/or other medications to treat their diabetes. What if there is another medication that is just as effective for treating diabetes and also prevents a dozen of other diseases? Fortunately, that medication exists, and it is exercise.

However, patients with diabetes rarely follow exercise as closely as their medication prescriptions. Or worse, they let their medical condition stop them from exercising, while perpetuating the vicious cycle of physical inactivity and disease progression. A national study conducted in the United States shows only 31% of diabetics meeting the recommended level of physical activity<sup>1</sup>.

Exercise has proven to be at least as effective as medication in the prevention of mortality in diabetics<sup>1</sup>. It has the immediate benefits of improving insulin action, and lowering blood sugar. Mild- to moderate-intensity exercise results in decreased blood sugar levels in most diabetics immediately after exercise, with effects lasting up to 72 hours after exercise.

Exercise can improve overall fitness, decrease body fat, and improve blood pressure, blood sugar, and cholesterol levels. In addition, studies have shown that exercise reduces risk of heart disease, improves energy and sleep, improves mood, and reduces stress<sup>2</sup>.

“After being diagnosed with diabetes at the age of 13, I became aware of the importance of exercising. Exercise is part of my regime to keep my blood glucose optimal so I can be productive and enjoy what life offers,” says Exercise is Medicine ambassador Julian Hee.

Exercise guidelines recommend at least 150 minutes per week of moderate-intensity exercise, such as brisk walking, swimming or cycling. Choose an activity that is enjoyable and sustainable, whether it is playing tennis, doing zumba, or walking your dog. Strength training 2-3 times a week is also important for diabetics for optimal insulin action and blood sugar control.

Don't have time to fit 150 minutes of exercise per week into such busy schedules? Fortunately, 10-minute bouts of aerobic exercise throughout the day also count. Contrary to common belief, exercise does not require going to the gym. It is surprisingly simple to incorporate exercise into everyday life and

even at the workplace. Research shows that a simple 15-minute walk after each meal significantly improves blood sugar.

Visit [www.eims.sg](http://www.eims.sg) to find EIMS certified physicians and clinical fitness professionals near you to prescribe appropriate and safe exercises customized for you.

Reference:

1. Nelson, Karin M., Gayle Reiber, and Edward J. Boyko. "Diet and exercise among adults with type 2 diabetes findings from the third national health and nutrition examination survey (NHANES III)." *Diabetes care* 25.10 (2002): 1722-1728.
2. Phan, Thao P., et al. "Forecasting the burden of type 2 diabetes in Singapore using a demographic epidemiological model of Singapore." *BMJ open diabetes research & care* 2.1 (2014): e000012.