

Exercise and Type II Diabetes

Diabetes mellitus is a chronic illness. Obesity (particularly central obesity), aging and urbanization of lifestyle including unhealthy eating habits and lack of exercise are all contributory factors to rising rates of diabetes. Diabetes is a condition that impairs the body's ability to process blood glucose through inadequate (usage of) insulin and thus raising the blood glucose level. On a long-term basis, high blood glucose can damage nerves, small and large blood vessels, resulting in complications affecting the kidney, heart, brain, eye and feet.



In Hong Kong



Over 90% of people with diabetes have type 2 disease. The prevalence has increased from approximately 4.5% in 1990 to 10% recently. That means one in ten people in Hong Kong suffers from diabetes mellitus. It was the tenth commonest cause of deaths in Hong Kong, accounting for 6% of all deaths in 2018.

Why Can Exercise Help?



Exercise most importantly helps to control your blood sugar level, as it helps your cells to become more sensitive to insulin, making them work more effectively. Furthermore, regular physical activity helps lower blood pressure, lower harmful LDL cholesterol and triglycerides, raise healthy HDL cholesterol, and improve your general well-being.

Exercise Recommendations

Aerobic Exercise



Be active on most days of the week but at least three to four days. Work up to five days a week



Exercise 30-60 minutes per day at a moderate level



Any type of rhythmic exercises using large muscle groups

Resistance Training



Do resistance training at least two days per week



Exercise at a moderate level



This will depend on the number of exercises you do



Exercise all major muscle groups using either free weights or a machine

A combination of aerobic and resistance training leads to the BEST health outcomes

Tips for Getting Started

- Although exercise is important in managing your diabetes, you may need to make changes to your diet.
- Start by exercising on your own. Begin walking or another form of activity that you can integrate into your daily routine.
- Use an activity tracker to monitor your progress. Slowly work toward a goal, like 10,000 steps per day.

References

- 1) 2019, 'Diabetes Mellitus', The Centre for Health Protection, <<https://www.chp.gov.hk/en/healthtopics/content/25/59.html>> (viewed on 26/11/2019)
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- 4) 'The importance of exercise when you have diabetes', Harvard Health Publishing, <<https://www.health.harvard.edu/staying-healthy/the-importance-of-exercise-when-you-have-diabetes>> (viewed on 26/11/2019)