

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

It is recommended that adults with type 2 diabetes engage in 2½ hours (150 minutes) of moderate intensity physical activity, such as aerobic activity, per week. This activity should be distributed evenly over the week and each bout should be at least 10 minutes long. Brisk walking is suggested as it is easy to do and good for everyone. You should walk fast enough to breathe faster and deeper than usual and to feel that you are working hard, but not so fast that you cannot carry on a conversation or have trouble breathing.

Other types of activity include resistance training and flexibility training. These ought to complement aerobic activity and not to replace it.

Although being physically active is usually safe for adults with type 2 diabetes, it is important to consult your doctor about your physical activity levels. The following are some important issues which ensure safety:

- You should be checked by your doctor prior to starting a new physical activity programme.
- You should wear an identity bracelet, which identifies you as having diabetes, particularly if you are exercising alone, so that others may help you appropriately in the event something unexpected happens.

- If the blood sugar level is less than 8.0 mmols/l prior to exercise, you should take a carbohydrate snack prior to beginning the exercise. If the blood sugar level is higher than 8.0 mmols/l before exercise, it may not be necessary to take a carbohydrate snack before a light exercise session, but you may need extra carbohydrates during or following the exercise. You should follow these guidelines until you understand better how a certain type of exercise (and its duration) affects your blood sugar. Your aim should be to avoid low or high levels of sugar in your blood, during or after exercise.
- It is unlikely that a few minutes of moderate intensity physical activity will cause your blood sugar to drop very low. Nevertheless, you should always carry a fast-acting carbohydrate food (such as 150mls orange juice or three teaspoons of sugar) so if symptoms (such as: dizziness, excessive sweating, tremors, irritability, nervousness or headaches) occur, treatment would be readily available. Afterwards you should always seek professional advice.
- You should stop exercising in case of illness or pain. In these circumstances you should visit your doctor or the emergency department.

TAKE ACTION NOW!

Weight loss is recommended for all overweight or obese adults, especially those who have type 2 diabetes. Both diet and physical activity are important to lose weight and keep it off. Diet is the more important of the two for weight loss, whereas physical activity is a relatively more important predictor of successful weight maintenance. So, a good balance of the two is needed for a healthy lifestyle.

It is important to set a weight loss goal that is both achievable and maintainable. Weight loss should be not more than 0.5 / 1kg per week. Losing weight more quickly than this may not be sustainable over time.



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The Health Promotion and Disease Prevention Directorate, in collaboration with the Diabetes and Endocrine Centre of Mater Dei Hospital, provide educational and weight management classes for individuals with type 2 diabetes.

For more information kindly call
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References

Diabetes.co.uk (2015). *Diabetes and Exercise*. Retrieved from <http://www.diabetes.co.uk/exercise-for-diabetics.html>
Kramer K., Kriska A., Orchard T., Semler L., Venditti E., and Gillis B. (2011). Group Lifestyle Balance. Retrieved from <http://www.diabetesprevention.pitt>



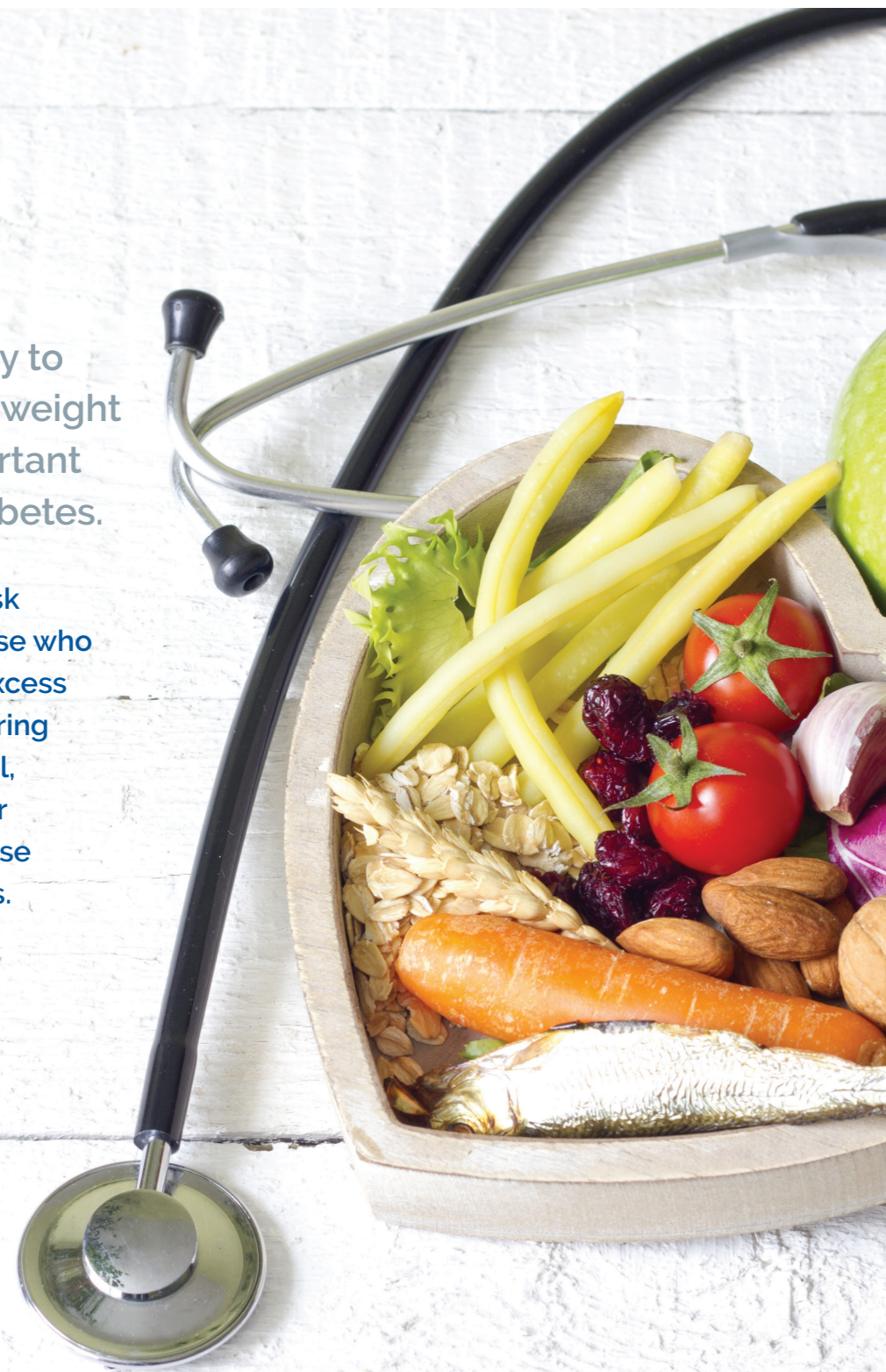
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MINISTRY FOR HEALTH



TYPE 2 DIABETES AND ACHIEVING A HEALTHY WEIGHT

Everyone should try to maintain a healthy weight but it is more important when you have diabetes.

Obesity increases the risk of complications for those who have diabetes. Losing excess weight, apart from lowering your blood glucose level, will help to improve your heart health and decrease the risk of complications.



WHAT IS A HEALTHY WEIGHT?

By calculating the BMI (Body Mass Index), you can find out whether your weight is within the healthy range. It is calculated by dividing the weight by the height squared:

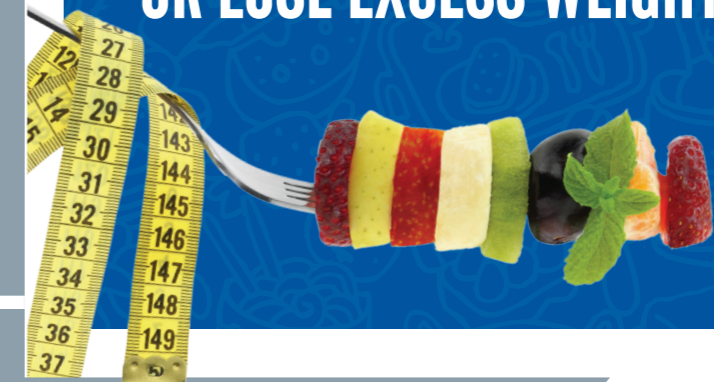
$$\text{BMI} = \frac{\text{WEIGHT (IN kg)}}{\text{HEIGHT} \times \text{HEIGHT (IN m)}}$$

EXAMPLE
 $\frac{70\text{kg}}{1.75\text{m} \times 1.75\text{m}} = 22.86\text{kg/m}^2$

The BMI can be used to indicate if a person is **underweight, normal weight, overweight or obese**. The following are the standard BMI categories for adults:

BMI (kg/m ²)	Weight Status	
Below 18.5	Underweight	
18.5 – 24.9	Normal (Healthy)	
25.0 – 29.9	Overweight	
30.0 and Above	Obese	

HOW TO MAINTAIN A HEALTHY WEIGHT OR LOSE EXCESS WEIGHT



Low energy balanced diets and regular physical activity help a person to lose excess weight and maintain a healthy weight. These improve blood sugar control, reduce cholesterol, high blood pressure and the risk of cardiovascular diseases. Physical activity also improves sensitivity towards insulin.

Losing just a few kilos through exercise and eating well can help with your diabetes control and can reduce your risk for other health problems. You will also have more energy and feel better in general!

HEALTHY EATING

In order to eat healthily and lose weight, eat smaller portion sizes based on a balanced nutritious diet. Keep in mind that most of the fat and sugar we eat is hidden in foods. Also, eating too many calories from any type of food means that the person will put on weight.

EAT MEALS REGULARLY

You should spread your calories through the day in a pattern that fits your lifestyle and eating preferences. You should try to eat 3 meals each day and include 1 or 2 healthy snacks in between. This will keep you from getting too hungry and losing control, and keep your glucose levels stable. Trying to eat at the same time everyday can be helpful.

EATING SLOWLY

You will digest food better if you take small bites and chew the food well. You will be more mindful of what you are eating and more aware of when you are full. Enjoy the taste of your food and the company of your family or friends!

DO NOT WORRY ABOUT CLEARING YOUR PLATE!

The greatest waste of food is to eat more than you want, or require, and not to leave it behind. You should practise serving smaller portions to begin with.