

## How to Manage Your Diabetes When It's Hot Outside

**Don't let the heat get to you. Here's how to maintain your diabetes routine even in the summer.**

By [Vanessa Caceres](#), Contributor | May 30, 2017, at 10:02 a.m.

Hot weather can bring time off, [travel](#), increased outdoor activities and welcome changes in routine. It can also upset your diabetes routine if you're not careful.

That can happen for a few reasons. First, in the hotter summer months, you're more likely to change your routine. Kids are out of school, and you may go on a vacation. It's common to get lax about what you eat or when you take your [diabetes medications](#) or insulin.

**[See: [6 Tips to Keep Diabetics Out of the Hospital.](#)]**

Second, you may exercise outside more if the weather is inviting – or you may move less if you're living in a virtual sauna and can't go outside regularly for a walk or run. In either case, a change in activity could [change your blood sugar](#).

Finally, hotter temperatures require greater care of your insulin and diabetes supplies.

The bottom line: "Enjoy the summer and engage in many activities, but be vigilant [about diabetes]," advises [Dr. Supneet Saluja](#), an endocrinologist at The Center for Endocrinology at Mercy Medical Center in Baltimore.

Here are a few areas to monitor when it's hot out to maintain good diabetes care.

### **Physical Activity**

Hotter weather could change your [outdoor exercise routine](#), so make plans to accommodate for this. While visiting Phoenix recently, San Francisco-based Adam Brown, senior editor and columnist at [diaTribe](#) and author of "Bright Spots & Landmines: The Diabetes Guide I Wish Someone Had Handed Me," walked outside at night to avoid the daytime heat. Or consider walking early in the morning before the heat and humidity hit their daytime highs. The important thing is that you stay consistent with an exercise routine.

"Diabetes is a condition of routines and habits, and summer brings different routines and changes," Brown says. That's why doing your best to maintain routines related to diabetes care is so important.



## RELATED CONTENT

### [Diabetes and Exercise: How to Dive In](#)

Planning foods, tracking blood sugar and tweaking insulin help keep you in the swim.

---

If you find it hard to fit longer stretches of exercise into your hot-weather routine, aim for small but consistent activity bursts. When Brown is strapped for time, he'll wear a weighted vest while walking his dog. You could also exercise at home with low-cost equipment or online videos.

Make sure to hydrate before, during and after exercise outside, and check your blood sugar more regularly since physical activity can alter it. "You want to prevent dehydration and hypoglycemia," says [Lory Gonzalez](#), a nurse educator at the Diabetes Research Institute at the University of Miami Miller School of Medicine.

### **Eating and Drinking**

Let's face it: You're likely to be tempted this summer at a cookout with classic food like burgers and hot dogs. Plan how you'll approach those kinds of meals. For example, you could eat the burger, but wrap it in lettuce or use no bun, to help cut down on carbs, Brown suggests.

If you do eat some of the summer staples that aren't as good for you when you have diabetes, adjust your insulin accordingly, Saluja advises.

You could also plan to [fill up on veggies](#) at home before you head out for the cookout.

**[Read: [9 Foods to Help Prevent Type 2 Diabetes.](#)]**

Having rules for how you'll eat or exercise can help in unpredictable situations that are more likely to crop up in the summer, Brown says.

Another major hot-weather concern for everyone – not just those with diabetes – is [staying hydrated](#). Carry a water bottle with you wherever you go so you're always reminded to sip, Gonzalez says. The best drink to help you avoid dehydration is plain water. If that gets boring, add a squeeze of lemon or lime or flavor it with fruit. Other caffeine-free liquids you drink can count toward your water intake, but sodas and alcoholic drinks do not, Saluja says.

Generally speaking, you'll want to avoid sports drinks to hydrate because of their added sugar. They may be part of your routine if you are exercising for more than an hour, but even then they should be used sparingly.

Watch out in the summer for signs of dehydration, as that can alter your blood sugar. Symptoms include a dry mouth, headache, a darker yellow urine or a weak feeling. Without proper hydration, you could pass out, even if you don't have diabetes.

## **Diabetes Supplies**

Diabetes supplies can be sensitive to heat, so they require extra care in the summer. For example, insulin should be refrigerated until it is open. Once open, it should stay at room temperature. If you leave your insulin in your car's glove compartment on a hot day, you could ruin it. It may be less effective or not work at all, and that can unexpectedly change your blood sugar.

To help remedy this, take your insulin with you. "If you're comfortable, your insulin is comfortable," Gonzalez says.

In fact, if you find that your [blood sugar is running high](#) and there's no other obvious cause, consider whether your insulin has been exposed to heat.

Some diabetes experts favor a portable cooler pack that fills with water (no ice needed) and keeps insulin at the right temperature for up to two days.

You'll also want to keep your testing strips at room temperature, as those can also get ruined by heat.

**[Read: [11 Tips for Testing Your Blood Sugar at Home.](#)]**

If you use an insulin pump or continuous glucose monitor, keep in mind that all of your summer fun in the sun can cause you to sweat more, making it easier for your devices to come off. Consider using a liquid adhesive to help the devices stick to your body, which can help you avoid a potential emergency. "If I go to the beach and my pump comes off, I'll be in trouble in four to five hours. I could be in the hospital soon," Brown says.

Finally, always have an ice pack or similar item for your diabetes supplies available, even at home. You never know when electricity might go out in a summer storm. "You have to have a plan B," Saluja says.