

# ***Activity Counts—for All Ages!***

By the [National Diabetes Education Program](#)

Being active is not only good for you, it's important for the children and teens in your life as well! Our bodies benefit when we're active, especially if we have diabetes. Physical activity can help us feel better, reduce stress, keep our weight and blood glucose levels in a healthy range, and increase our energy level. We sleep better, too.

As more and more youth become overweight and less active, type 2 diabetes – once only seen in adults over 40 – is now being found in teens. You can play a key role by helping the children and teens in your life lower their risk for type 2 diabetes, especially if the disease runs in your family. Children and teens can lower their risk for type 2 diabetes if they stay at a healthy weight by being more physically active and choosing to eat the right amounts of healthy foods.

There are many ways you can be physically active with the children and teens in your life. Play music and teach your teen some of your own dance steps. Take a walk together, or ride bikes. How about walking the dog, doing yard work, or planting a garden together? Why not go swimming at the local pool or arrange a date to go bowling? These are fun activities that everyone can enjoy.

Is your child or grandchild involved in school or community sports, such as basketball, golf, soccer, or tennis? Try to attend as many of the games as you can and lend your support. Find out the game dates, and mark your calendar. Praise your teen for getting involved and stress the value of physical activity.

Learn more about events in your area. Are there any walks planned in your neighborhood? Perhaps there is a hike at a nearby nature center or forest preserve. Or go visit a local museum or zoo. These are great chances to be physically active as a family while having fun and meeting new people. Don't forget to dress for the weather and wear comfortable shoes. Pack a small cooler or backpack of healthy snacks such as fresh or dried fruit, sliced raw vegetables, and nonfat or low-fat yogurt. Also, pack a few bottles of water instead of soda or juice.

The National Diabetes Education Program has a free tip sheet, [Tips for Teens: Lower Your Risk for Type 2 Diabetes](#), to help the young people in your life learn more about how they can lower their risk for type 2 diabetes. Download or order the tip sheet and more free resources by visiting [www.YourDiabetesInfo.org](http://www.YourDiabetesInfo.org) or calling 1-888-693-NDEP (6337); TTY: 1-866-569-1162.

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