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facts about regulating gestational diabetes with physical exercise



1

GDM can affect both mother and baby

Gestational diabetes mellitus (GDM) can lead to increased risk of:

- caesarean section/instrumental delivery, high blood pressure, pre-eclampsia and excessive weight gain for the mother or birthing parent
- higher birth weight and higher risk of obesity, cardiovascular disease and diabetes later in life for the baby.



2

Exercise equates to energy in GDM management

Exercise is crucial in managing GDM:

- unmanaged blood sugar levels in GDM can compound feelings of tiredness
- fatigue and energy are greatly improved by regular exercise
- exercise can improve mental health-related fatigue in pregnancy.



3

People with GDM should aim for enjoyable exercise three times a week

Pregnancy exercise guidelines recommend 150–300 minutes per week. The aim should be:

- to exercise at least three times per week at a moderate intensity
- to focus on enjoyable exercise with pregnancy safety measures in mind
- to combine supervised group exercise sessions with educational support for people with GDM.



4

Exercise helps prevent or reduce the severity of GDM

Exercise is important during and after pregnancy:

- people who have experienced GDM benefit from structured and supervised exercise programs, often provided by a physiotherapist
- aerobic exercise can help reduce blood glucose levels
- resistance training can lower capillary glucose and fasting blood glucose levels.



5

More sleep and less stress improve blood sugar levels in GDM

It has been observed that:

- physical activity during pregnancy is associated with improved sleep quality
- exercise during pregnancy can help support mental wellbeing.



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