

## **Stop Flirting with Diabetes**

Has your doctor told you “you’re flirting with diabetes”? Most people will tell you to change your diet, cut out sugar and exercise. Changing your lifestyle and habits quickly and drastically is something few of us can do successfully. Better to change habits slowly, a little at a time. If you start as soon as your doctor warns you, you may be able to delay or prevent diabetes. Here are two basic ways to get started slowly.

Don’t try changing “what” you eat, as much as changing “when” you eat. For every sugary or starchy food you eat, have a protein. For example:

You want ice cream in the middle of the afternoon.

If you’re out and about:

- Drop by KFC first and get some chicken
- Stop at a grocery store and buy some lunch meat
- Keep some jerky or nuts in your car

At home, keep easy-to-grab protein sources on hand:

- Hard-boiled eggs
- Sausage
- Frozen chicken nuggets

Make it a habit that before you eat that candy bar, cookie or doughnut; you eat some protein. This is an excellent habit to teach your whole family. If your kids are in the habit of eating protein with any sweet, you may prevent problems for them later in life.



Exercise...the dreaded word.

To get started here, make it as easy on yourself as possible.

- The habit of going for a walk after dinner is a nice one.
- If you like to watch TV in the evenings and don't want to feel like you're exercising, try a recumbent exercise bike. You can sit back and pretend you're in your easy-chair while you cycle away. Put it in the living room in front of the TV. Replacing one chair with an exercise bike doesn't take up any more room and you may find visitors sit down and use it while you talk.
- This could also work with a treadmill if you have the room.

The important thing is to make it as convenient as possible to use. (*A note of caution.... Make a rule that no one is allowed to put things on your exercise equipment. You'll never use it if it's buried under clothes.*)

Another option is to find something that is fun for you, and do it. There are so many new types of exercise out there now, just keep looking until you find one you love.

Some interesting options:

- Surfing exercise--There is an exercise that allows you to simulate surfing in your home. Or you could try the real thing.
- Dancing—Ballroom, Tap, Modern, Country, Line-dancing, Step-dancing, Pole-dancing... the list is endless.
- Hula Hooping—by chair or weighted hoops.
- Tumbling—Gymnastics, Trapeze, Aerial Yoga

You don't have to do it forever if you don't like it. Just "date" a new type of exercise. Make it a priority.



Lastly, don't be afraid to use incentives on yourself. We do it for our kids.

- If you love to hunt or fish; plan a big, ambitious trip. Every time you go out to walk or run, remind yourself that this will enable you to catch that deer or get to that backcountry lake.
- If you run, sign up for a marathon or a fun run.
- Bike riding? Make plans to do a two-day long ride through wine country.
- If you love to golf, enter a tournament.

Next, get in shape for it.

You want to enjoy any of these big events you've planned, without being winded or hurting. That's good incentive to keep going the rest of the time.

Yes, it will take some effort, but if you take it in small steps, you can do this. Stop flirting with diabetes, and start a relationship with a new healthy you.

