

10

Ways to Beat the Heat & Stay Healthy This Summer

Summertime and the living is...well, hot and humid, which can pose several challenges for people with diabetes. The good news is, with a few relatively simple precautions, you can safely enjoy all that the warm weather has to offer.



✓ *Maximize your morning meal*

Ignoring your morning meal can lower or raise your blood sugar levels, depending on your medication. A good choice? Protein-rich foods! Because they take longer to digest, they can help you avoid midmorning hunger pangs. Try Greek yogurt, natural peanut butter on whole-wheat toast or eggs with turkey sausage.

» [More breakfast ideas](#)



✓ *Check blood sugar levels often*

Changes in activity and heat levels can alter how fast your body absorbs insulin and, therefore, may affect your medication needs.



✓ *Keep supplies cool*

Insulin, oral diabetes meds, test strips and blood glucose meters should be stored in a cool, dry, dark place—never in the glove compartment, trunk or in direct sunlight. Tip! Place insulin in a waterproof zipped bag, wrap it in a towel to avoid direct contact with ice packs and store it in a small cooler.

» [More hot-weather hints](#)



✓ *Reach for H₂O*

Excessive sweating during hot, humid summer days can cause dehydration—which can lead to an increase in blood sugar. Even worse, excess blood sugar can make you urinate more often, which further dehydrates you. Aim for eight 8-oz. glasses of water or other fluids (nonalcoholic and non-caffeinated) a day, and even more if you're active.

10

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Stay safe while traveling

Stash all your meds and supplies (pumps, syringes, etc.) in your carry-on, in case your luggage is lost. Plus, you'll have your medication if your travel is delayed or you need it unexpectedly.

» [More travel safety tips](#)



Be snack savvy

When you're on the go, carry light bites, such as oranges, nuts, graham crackers, water-packed tuna, low-fat string cheese and/or dried apricots or raisins. You'll be glad you did if your blood sugar dips or an unexpected problem arises—say, for example, you're flying and the airline doesn't serve a meal.



Control carbs on vacation

If you're traveling to a destination that's known for a certain fare, enjoy entrées that include those foods. But pass on the ice cream or cookies because you can have those anytime. That way you'll be able to fit in local indulgences without feeling deprived.

» [More on eating smart while away](#)



Put on sunglasses daily

Good shades (choose lenses that block 99%-100% of both UVA and UVB rays) protect your eyes from UV rays that can contribute to cataracts, a vision problem people with diabetes are two to five times more likely to develop.



Put your feet first

Wear shoes at the beach. Sand gets very hot, and if you have reduced sensation in your feet, they could get burned without realizing it. Even if you have full sensation, sand can hide sharp objects—such as broken shells.

» [More on foot health](#)



Watch for signs of heat exhaustion

Because nerve damage due to diabetes can keep sweat glands from working properly, people with diabetes are at a greater risk for heat exhaustion. Signs include heavy sweating, extreme weakness, dizziness and/or confusion, nausea, clammy moist skin, pale or flushed complexion, muscle cramps, elevated body temperature and/or fast and shallow breathing. If you experience any of these, move to an air-conditioned space, drink plenty of cool fluids and seek immediate medical attention.

10

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Bonus Recipe!

Beat the heat with this easy and satisfying *Blueberry Smoothie*

Servings: 1

Ingredients

½ cup skim milk, chilled
1 packet of artificial sweetener
½ tsp vanilla
1 cup blueberries

Directions

Put the first three ingredients into a blender. Add the blueberries a few at a time, and whirl after each addition until thick and creamy.

Note: To make it "frosty," use frozen blueberries.

Nutrition facts (per serving):

calories 134, carbohydrates 28 g, protein 5 g, fat 1 g, cholesterol 2 mg, fiber 4 g, sodium 56 mg, potassium 234 mg, calcium 120 mg

Source: South Dakota Department of Health

