



HEALTH AWARENESS

Diabetes, Exercise And Low Blood Sugar

(NAPSA)—The human brain and body need glucose—also known as blood sugar—to function properly, and it’s needed in the right amount.

When the body fails to make or properly use insulin—a hormone that takes glucose from the bloodstream and carries it into the body’s cells, where it is used for energy—the condition is called diabetes. Too much glucose built up in the bloodstream can have serious long-term consequences for the kidneys, eyes and heart.

While most people with diabetes use medication to manage their blood sugar, many also turn to exercise.

According to the experts at The Hormone Foundation, physical activity is like a “secret weapon” in the battle against the effects of diabetes. When you exercise, your body becomes more sensitive to the effects of insulin.

For many people with diabetes, regular exercise, such as taking a walk every day, may make it possible to cut the amount of medications they need to control their blood sugar.

Because exercise helps to lower blood sugar, some diabetes medications may need to be adjusted to avoid hypoglycemia as you go about your exercise program.

Hypoglycemia is the medical term for low blood sugar. A sudden drop in blood sugar can have seri-



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ous consequences. Exercise, which naturally pulls sugar out of your bloodstream for energy, can trigger a severe drop in blood sugar.

Hypoglycemia can bring on a variety of symptoms, from an urgent need to eat in mild cases, to dizziness and confusion, to—in the most severe examples—a seizure, convulsions or coma.

Fortunately, it’s usually possible to raise blood sugar levels quickly by simply eating or drinking a food or beverage that contains carbohydrates (a glass of fruit juice or five or six pieces of hard candy).

To learn more, visit the Web site www.hormone.org.