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Media Release – The Significant Benefits of Physical Activity for Diabetes

From: NZ Register of Exercise Professionals



The Significant Benefits of Physical Activity for Diabetes

There are over 240,000 people in New Zealand who have been diagnosed with diabetes.

Most of these have type 2 diabetes, with cases of obesity-related type 2 diabetes on the rise. It is suggested that there are another 100,000 people with diabetes but undiagnosed. Internationally, the statistics are no better, with one in 11 adults worldwide with diabetes, and with up to 90% of those being type 2 diabetes.

Symptoms of diabetes vary but if you have any of the above risk factors and are experiencing the following it is important to seek medical advice. These may include: feeling tired and lacking energy, feeling thirsty and/or hungry, getting infections frequently that are hard to heal, poor eyesight or blurred vision

With these alarming statistics and with the range of negative health outcomes including reduction in lifestyle and early death, it is not surprising that health experts across the world are recommending steps be taken to reduce new cases of diabetes, and prevent ongoing health deterioration for those already diagnosed.

While medical intervention is important for many, it is lifestyle related prevention and treatment that is becoming more popular. A position paper from the European Association of Preventive Cardiology (EAPC), published recently in the *European Journal of Preventive Cardiology*, recommends that patients with type 2 diabetes be prescribed physical activity to control blood sugar and improve heart health.

While many cases of type 2 diabetes are obesity related, the paper suggests that exercise alone may not be the way to gain the reduction in weight required, however, the other health benefits of exercise unrelated to weight-loss such as glucose control and prevention of heart related diseases are positive enough alone to encourage exercise.

The paper has some straightforward recommendations for the medical community, advising that the current approach of doctors simply advising patients to be more active is not enough.

Closer to home, healthy living guidelines such as those produced by our Ministry of Health have recommended regular exercise as part of reducing the risk of diabetes and other preventable diseases for a number of years. While any sort of movement is recommended, specific styles of activity that have gained popularity such as High Intensity Interval Training or HIIT are gaining respect for their results with some patients. For those with more advanced conditions, slow and steady will be more safe and realistic.

Back to those doctors; while advising more exercise is as far as some medical professionals go in supporting physical activity, more support can be gained through the exercise community. We are fortunate that in New Zealand there are a range of structured and well supported exercise and physical activity options to help get those with diabetes started into regular physical activity. It is very important though to make sure that when using an exercise professional or exercise facility, that they have the appropriate skills and knowledge including industry mandated exercise professional registration.

Useful links:

<http://www.diabetes.org.nz>

www.reps.org.nz

<https://tinyurl.com/yanexn6l>

Contact details for further information about the exercise industry:

NZ Register of Exercise Professionals, Registrar Stephen Gacsal

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NZ Register of Exercise Professionals (REPs) - Independent not for profit quality mark of exercise professionals and facilities. Using REPs Registered Exercise Professionals is the “warrant of fitness check” that exercise professionals and facilities meet New Zealand and internationally benchmarked standards to deliver safe exercise advice and instruction. REPs is affiliated globally to other national exercise professional registers representing over 210,000 exercise professionals through the International Confederation of Registers for Exercise Professionals (ICREPs) - www.icreps.org

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Exercise Association of New Zealand - Not for profit exercise industry representative organisation. Its *mission is to proactively support a sustainable exercise and fitness industry in New Zealand by growing participation in structured exercise through advocacy, information and industry standards.*

