



# Diabetes *Views*

## My Daily Exercise

*Monica shares her strategy for sneaking exercise into her busy work day.*

I usually take my lunch away from the office. It's not just to get away from my desk for a little bit, it's a chance to do some exercise while I'm at work. I used to have a gym membership but it just didn't work for me. Getting to the gym, needing to change clothes and getting back to work in such a short period of time was stressful! Now, instead of going to the gym I go for a walk at lunch.

When the weather is nice, I walk up to City Hall. On days when it's cold or rainy I still go for my walk but instead of going out, I walk around the first floor of the hospital. It's great because no one needs to know I'm exercising and while the pace may be slower, at least I'm still moving and burning calories. A friend gave me a pedometer recently and I've been wearing it for a week or two now. Seeing how many steps I take while at work and how many calories I burn in just half a day is amazing. Wearing the pedometer has motivated me to walk even more.

At home, I sometimes go to the park (it's a great option if you have kids and time to go for a walk after dinner) but more often I spend time gardening. I grow

flowers as well as vegetables like green peppers, cucumbers and squash— things that need to be watered every day. Gardening is also very relaxing, and even if you have a small yard or live in an apartment you can still grow some fresh vegetables for yourself.

Here are some other suggestions for getting exercise. If you take the train or a bus to work, get off a stop early and walk the rest of the way. We're lucky to have a T stop right outside Mass General, but maybe you can try getting off at Park Street. If you're going shopping, find a parking spot farther away from the store (and wear comfortable shoes, not high heels). Take the stairs if you can. I rarely take the elevator if I'm going down stairs, and make a point of walking up the stairs to my office at least once a day—and my office is on the seventh floor.

The most important thing is exercise can be anywhere. It doesn't have to be just outside or at the gym.

*Monica has also contributed to the DSME's online blog. If you have a story about your experience with Diabetes you'd like to share for a future issue of Diabetes Views or on the [DSME blog](#), e-mail [diabetesviews@partners.org](mailto:diabetesviews@partners.org)*



world diabetes day  
14 November

## World Diabetes Day is Monday, November 14!

We will be holding our annual World Diabetes Day education and awareness event from 10am-3pm in the MGH main corridor.

Learn more about Diabetes at our information table, ask a dietitian your questions about diet and nutrition, and participate in our free glucose screening.

# 'Tis the Season. . . Cold and Flu Season

By Eileen B. Wyner, NP

Bulfinch Medical Group

Well, it's that time of year again. And no, I'm not talking about late weeknights waiting for the Red Sox to pull out a playoff win or trying to walk away from the Halloween candy sales, but the always annual and never glamorous COLD AND FLU SEASON! All of us are at risk, but any illness can present a bigger challenge for those living with Diabetes. Each year there are many reports of serious complications from the flu, so it's important to know the difference between a cold and the flu.

Let's start by understanding what cold and flu illnesses are and what makes them different from each other. Both are viral respiratory illnesses caused by **two different** viruses. Sometimes it's hard to tell which illness you have, so here are a few key points. A **cold** usually comes on slowly, with symptoms such as a stuffy nose, sneezing, and sore throat. It's unusual to have a fever with a cold, but you may have a hacking cough. With the **flu**, you get a fever very quickly that may be as high as 101-103°, along with chills, bad body aches, and a dry cough. The symptoms of the flu are usually so bad that can't do your normal activities until you feel better.

Treating these illnesses can be challenging because there is no cure. It's hard to prevent colds, but there are some things it is very important to do: wash your hands frequently, cough or sneeze into your elbow, and don't feel bad if you don't shake hands or embrace coworkers and family during this season. However, it *is* possible to prevent the flu by getting the flu vaccine every year. This is an *inactivated* vaccine—meaning it will not give you the flu—that's changed each year to work better. It will not prevent other colds or coughs BUT it will help to prevent the flu.

Because both cold and flu are caused by a virus, antibiotics are not helpful (antibiotics are just used to treat bacterial infections). It's important to treat your

symptoms so you will feel more comfortable. Some

things you can do are:

drink plenty of fluids;

take medicines to relieve your fever,

achiness, and nasal

congestion; and get lots of rest. You should call your health care provider with any questions or concerns, especially if you have a fever of 100.5° or higher or a cough that persists for 5 days or longer.

Any illness can make it difficult for you to keep your blood sugar values well controlled. You may need to check your blood sugar more often than usual, and have a harder time keeping it at a normal level. You may need to make changes in your diet and medications during the illness. Check with your health care provider or certified Diabetes educator to design an illness plan just for you.

Make a date with yourself today: take yourself for a flu shot. It will be good for your health.



## MGH Central Flu Clinic

Main Lobby of the Wang Building,

Mon, September 26 – Friday, Nov 11

Monday to Friday, 8:00 AM – 6:00 PM

(3:00 PM on Columbus Day Mon, October 10)

Saturday Oct 15 and Oct 22

9:00 AM – 3:00 PM

**Please call the Toll Free Flu Shot Hotline at 1-877-733-3737 before you come in to confirm that we have vaccine in stock and that the clinic is open.**



# Ask the Nutritionist

By Annelise McDowell, Dietetic Intern &

Melanie Pearsall, RD, LDN, CDE, Nutritionist at MGH Revere

**I have Diabetes, and I'm trying to be active. Most days of the week I walk in the morning for about a half an hour to an hour. Recently, I've heard about coconut water. I've heard it's low in calories and carbohydrates, and high in electrolytes, making it better for hydration. Should I add coconut water into my daily diet?**

It's true that coconut water is low in calories and carbohydrates and contains a lot of electrolytes. However, if you're already drinking water after exercise the added calories from coconut water can add up. It's important to note as well that there are unflavored and flavored versions of coconut water. The flavored drinks have fruit purees, making them like sugary juices. Coconut water is also fairly expensive and can cost more than \$3.00 in some retail locations while regular water can be easily found at a lower cost.

While coconut water definitely contains a high amount of potassium, so do a lot of foods. If you're eating a diet high in fruits and vegetables such as bananas; melons; orange juice; spinach; tomatoes; squash; or potatoes, as well as beans; lentils; milk and yogurt, your diet will provide you with enough potassium. Pairing your diet with enough water will keep you just as hydrated as coconut water. For people exercising moderately, regular water and a healthy, varied diet is plenty.

## Apple Spiced Sweet Potatoes

1½ pound sweet potatoes

1½ cup sliced apples (skins can be left on)

¼ cup raisins

2 tsp canola oil

½ tsp cinnamon

½ tsp nutmeg

¼ tsp salt

2 tsp brown sugar

3 tbsp pecans, chopped

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Peel and chop sweet potatoes into 2" chunks. Slice apples. Add potatoes, apples, raisins, oil, cinnamon, nutmeg, salt and brown sugar to a casserole dish. Toss to combine and cover with foil. Cook until fork-tender, approximately 45 minutes. While potatoes are cooking, toast pecans in a skillet on medium heat until they start to turn brown and give off a nutty aroma, approximately 3 minutes. When potatoes are fully cooked, top with toasted pecans and serve.

**Yield: ~5-4 oz servings**



### NUTRITION INFORMATION

#### PER SERVING:

Calories: 212

Protein: 3g

Sodium: 195mg

Carbohydrate: 40g

Fiber: 5.5g

Fat: 5g

Sat Fat: 0.5g



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To submit a question for the nutritionist, leave a comment, or sign up to receive *DiabetesViews* in your inbox, please e-mail: [diabetesviews@partners.org](mailto:diabetesviews@partners.org)

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Reviewed by the Blum Patient and Family Learning Center for health literacy.