

# Adding Exercise to Diet in Early Type 2 Diabetes

*Brisk walking, added to intensive dietary intervention, did not result in additional lowering of glycosylated hemoglobin.*

International consensus guidelines recommend that initial treatment of patients with diabetes include dietary management and increased exercise, but few studies have addressed long-term benefits of these interventions in early type 2 diabetes.

U.K. researchers randomized 593 adults with recently diagnosed diabetes to usual care (standard advice on diet and exercise every 6 months), an intensive diet intervention (goal-oriented motivational dietary consultation every 3 months with monthly nurse support), or an intensive diet intervention plus an exercise intervention (30 minutes of brisk pedometer-monitored walking 5 times weekly). Medications were adjusted by doctors who were blinded to study allocation.

After 12 months, mean glycosylated hemoglobin (HbA<sub>1c</sub>) levels rose by 0.06% in the usual-care group and fell by 0.26% in the diet-only group and by 0.21% in the diet-plus-exercise group. HbA<sub>1c</sub> changes in both intervention groups differed significantly from that in the usual-care group but not from each other. The interventions had no effect on blood pressure. The two intervention groups had similar and significant mean improvements in weight, waist and hip circumferences, and insulin resistance, compared with the usual-care group.

**Comment:** The authors conclude that limited resources would be better applied to intensified dietary interventions than to added exercise interventions in patients with early type 2 diabetes. But these researchers did not examine the effects of an exercise intervention alone, and this exercise intervention might not have been sufficiently intense or optimally designed or timed for maximal effectiveness.

— **Bruce Soloway, MD**

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