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 Franciscan  
**WORKING** Well  
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# Fitness and Your Feet

If you worked out today, you likely laced up your shoes and got going. Maybe you took a walk, rode a bike, ran a mile, or lifted weights. Whatever you did, it is also likely that your focus was not your feet. For many, exercise is associated with improved heart health, increased muscle strength, and better flexibility. Our feet are just the tools to get us to our goals. But our feet take a lot of pounding on a daily basis and need some attention.

## TRY SOME FOOT EXERCISES!



FROM A SITTING POSITION, LIFT ONE LEG AND GENTLY ROTATE YOUR FOOT FROM THE ANKLE.

WITH YOUR FOOT ON THE GROUND, LIFT AND LOWER YOUR TOES.



AND FINALLY, ROLL A TENNIS BALL OR GOLF BALL UNDER EACH FOOT; THIS IS A GREAT MASSAGE FOR THE FEET!

Here are some ways to take care of your feet as you get fit.

- **Proper shoes are essential for exercise.** No matter what you choose to do, buy a shoe that fits well and has the proper structure and support. If you are an avid runner, you will need to replace your shoes more often.
- **Wear the right socks for comfort and health.** Some socks provide additional padding for comfort and support. You want socks that protect your feet from any rubbing of the shoe. You may also want to consider socks that pull moisture away from the foot (moisture-wicking).
- **Treat all calluses and blisters.** You can soak your feet and use a pumice stone, gently rubbing any calluses. Doing this a few times a week will help. If you have a blister, don't pop it. Keep it covered with a bandage during the day and let it air out at night.
- **See a doctor for any foot injury or alignment problems.**

**Taking care of your health includes taking care of your feet. And taking care of your feet can help you reach your fitness goals!**

# Understanding Multiple Sclerosis

With nearly 1 million people in the United States diagnosed with multiple sclerosis, it is likely that someone you know is managing this disease. The type of multiple sclerosis and the severity of symptoms vary from person to person, and the treatments may also vary.

## Here are some basics on multiple sclerosis (MS):

- **MS is an autoimmune disease**, one in which the body somehow attacks or does damage to itself. Here is how it works - your nervous system is composed of nerve fibers, and the ones in the spine and brain are coated by a substance called myelin. Myelin assists the nerves by helping signals to move along the fibers. In MS, the body, through the use of the immune system, attacks the myelin. By attacking the myelin, MS helps to disrupt the signals, causing a variety of symptoms, including issues with coordination and movement.
- **There are different types or courses of MS.** Most people (85%) are diagnosed with relapsing-remitting multiple sclerosis. Patients will experience periods of symptomatic disease followed by periods of apparent remission. Of this group, most will eventually progress to secondary progressive multiple sclerosis, which means that symptoms will progress without remission. A smaller percentage of people are diagnosed with primary progressive multiple sclerosis, associated with early disability to the disease.
- **The cause of MS is not clear;** however, there are certain risk factors: living in a colder climate, history of smoking, and exposure to the Epstein-Barr virus. These are not considered causes of MS at this time, only possible links to the disease. Women are twice as likely to be diagnosed with MS than men.
- **Diagnosis is made after the patient has developed neurological symptoms, and a doctor has run tests to rule out other possibilities for symptoms.** Many patients are given an MRI to detect lesions on the spine or in the brain. These lesions are the evidence of the disease attacking the myelin.
- **Treatments vary.** Patients are encouraged to take care of their overall health, eat right, exercise, and reduce stress. These actions can help patients keep their symptoms in remission. A wide variety of medications are used to treat MS. Patients should work

A holistic approach to health — one that includes physical, mental, and emotional health — is an important key to managing MS. Patients should work to find a physician or team of physicians with whom they are comfortable and in whom they feel confidence. Individuals can work with their medical team to live well with MS.

For more information, check out The National Multiple Sclerosis website at: [www.nationalmssociety.org](http://www.nationalmssociety.org)

March 2022 By: Jason Hojnacki, LCSW LAC, EAP Therapist

## How to Talk About Finances with a Loved One

One of the most delicate topics in families and relationships can be the topic of money. At times it can seem like our loved ones are on different pages about money and when we try to discuss it, the discussion turns into an argument. About a third of adults in serious relationships report money is a big source of conflict and studies have shown that financial problems are a big contributor to divorce. How can we discuss money with our spouse or family member without it becoming hostile?

### Important Ideas to Remember

- Listen
- Be honest
- Keep an open mind
- Remember your loved one is not the enemy
- Know where all the money is going
- Set a designated time to discuss money
- Discuss your long-term goals
- Meet with a financial advisor
- Try to be on the same page
- Have an equal say in expenses
- Know who pays for what
- Use the experience to strengthen the relationship



**For more information, join our webinar on How to Talk About Finances with a Loved One and The Beauty in Your Body on March 16th, 2022 at 11:30AM CST.**

**Call NIR 800-747-7262 or CIR 800-963-0060**

# Carbohydrates and Blood Glucose



We've been hearing a lot about carbs lately, how they are good to eat, bad to eat, and everything in between. Carbohydrates are one of three essential nutrients: fat, protein, and carbohydrate. All three are necessary for physical health, but not all three affect all people the same way. For example, those with diabetes need to monitor their carbohydrate intake in order to maintain healthy blood glucose levels. Let's take a look at carbohydrates and how they can impact glucose levels.

## Carbohydrates can be simple or complex.

- Simple carbohydrates are digested easily, which can raise blood sugars quickly. Foods that are primarily simple carbohydrates include sugar, syrups, cookies, white bread, white rice, and regular pasta.
- Complex carbohydrates have more fiber and are digested more slowly, keeping blood sugars from spiking. Most vegetables and whole grains are complex carbohydrates.

When we eat carbohydrates, our bodies break them down into sugars. When blood sugars (glucose) rise, the pancreas produces insulin, which helps the glucose enter the cells to provide energy. For those with diabetes, insulin is not produced, or not enough insulin is produced, and the glucose in the bloodstream remains high. Elevated blood glucose can do long term damage to the body, and significantly elevated blood glucose can cause a coma or even death.

## Diabetics need to manage carbohydrates carefully.

- Those with type 1 diabetes need to balance their carbohydrate intake with their insulin intake.
- Those with type 2 diabetes need to focus on complex carbohydrates and are often advised to limit the amount of carbohydrates at each meal and snack.

**Carbohydrates are an important form of energy, but it is easy to consume too many of them. Read all labels for added sugars and limit baked goods and treats. Enjoy whole fruits and vegetables, which contain necessary fiber, and try to have some protein with your carbohydrate. If you are diabetic, ask your doctor for the best way to monitor your blood glucose and carbohydrate intake.**



# The Creative Spirit

Creativity is what motivates artists, musicians, actors, and dancers. Their creativity exists as a means of expression and a way to communicate and connect with others. But even if you aren't in a creative field, having a creative spirit can help in both self-expression and as a way to promote physical, mental, and emotional health. Creativity — whether through art, music, wood-working, sewing, or dance — is good for all ages!

**What does it mean to be creative?** To be creative is to use your imagination to explore new ideas, solve problems, and construct new things. A creative spirit is an open mind to solutions previously not considered and alternative ways of doing things.

**How do I develop a more creative spirit?** There are many ways to discover your own creativity. The first step is to recognize that creativity, like any other skill, needs to be practiced. Find or make regular opportunities to explore your creativity.

- If you like art, try painting or taking an art class at a local studio or community center.
- If you used to play an instrument, consider playing again, either on your own or possibly in a group near you. If you no longer have your instrument, many music stores will rent instruments on a monthly basis.
- You can take up writing, knitting, dancing, or sewing. And if you need to learn how to do any of these, you can try videos on YouTube, classes at a community college or center, lessons at a dance studio, and can even find experts to teach you many arts and crafts at some craft stores.
- If you don't have much time, try journaling. You can find journals that include daily prompts and even journals that encourage doodling!

**How is creativity good for me?** Engaging in creative thinking and actions has many benefits. It can improve your physical health, whether through movement (e.g., dancing) or stress reduction. If you are working on a painting or building a table, your focus is on the moment, what is immediately in front of you. This type of mindfulness reduces stress, which helps to lower blood pressure and improve mood. Creativity is also good for your mental and emotional health. It can increase happiness, provide connection with others, allow for necessary solitude, and improve focus. Creativity can help you see solutions to problems that you haven't thought of and may even help to reduce memory loss in old age.

You don't have to be an artist or musician to have a creative spirit. Think about what interests you and be willing to give it a try. Creativity will help you find more joy and peace in your day to day life.

# Food of the month: Kumquats



Citrus fruits are sweet, tangy, and a great source of vitamin C, and the smallest citrus fruit, the kumquat, is no exception. Kumquats are known for their small, oblong shape and beautiful orange color. Though they may be difficult to find at your local grocery store, kumquats are worth a trip to a local Farmer's Market or specialty shop.

**The Basics:** Look for a fruit that is without blemish and looks plump and brilliantly colored. They can be stored in the refrigerator for up to two weeks or even on the counter for up to a week.

**When ready to eat or prepare, rinse the peel. No need to peel the fruit before eating! It's edible! (The peel is sweet compared to the tangy, sour fruit.)**

**Try This:** Make a kumquat jam or marmalade. Kumquats can tend to be a little bit sour, so you can control the sugar content in the jam to make it as sweet as you want! Slice 2 kumquats into thin slices and remove the seeds. Place the seeds on a square of cheesecloth and gather the cheesecloth to make a pouch that contains the seeds. You can use twine or string to tie the pouch closed. Place your sliced kumquats into a heavy pot with three cups of water and 2 tablespoons of lemon juice. Place the pouch of seeds in the water and let sit for 2-4 hours. The seeds contain pectin, which thickens your jam! After the wait, bring the water to a boil then simmer for about 30 minutes. Remove the seeds, and add  $\frac{3}{4}$  - 1 cup of sugar. Let the sugar dissolve, stirring occasionally. This should take about 15 minutes. Once thick, take off the heat and cool. Store in an airtight container in the refrigerator.

## Want to know more?

Connect with Working Well for more information on wellness programs and how they can help you reduce healthcare costs and improve employee well-being.



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