

Should I exercise if I'm sick?

Although you may be coughing, your body aching, and your nose running like a faucet, it can be difficult to decide if you should exercise or take a temporary break.

“We all know that exercise is key to good health, but there are times that your body may need a break,” said Dr. Keith Veselik, director of primary care at Loyola University Health System. “Having to slow down when you’re sick is Mother Nature’s way of saying don’t push it and it’s reasonable to pay attention to that.”

As a general rule, it’s okay to exercise if your symptoms are above the neck, such as a sore throat or runny nose. But it could be dangerous to exercise if you have the following symptoms: fever, shortness of breath, chest congestion, body aches, diarrhea, vomiting or dizziness.

When you’re sick, your body is already battling against an illness and that takes energy.

For instance, adding the extra stress of exercising while sick can be dangerous for someone with a heart condition. A person with diabetes may need to monitor blood glucose levels more often because being ill may raise glucose levels and exercise may lower them.

If you do have a medical condition and are not sure if you should exercise while sick, call your doctor.

