

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY
TALKING POINTS

What is physical activity?

- Moving the body to involve the small muscles in your body (moving a little bit of your body) for example: Playing board games, drawing
- Moving the body to involve the large muscles in your body (moving a lot of your body) for example: Jumping rope, biking, walking

Which kind of physical activity makes you healthy?

- Although involving the small muscles are important, moving the large muscles makes you healthy because you are moving more of your body!
- Any activity that gets you moving around, even done for a few minutes each day is good for you.

How much time should you be active to get health benefits?

- Adults should get a minimum of 30 minutes of physical activity most days of the week to get health benefits. These 30 minutes can be broken into three 10-minute sessions if you don't have time to do it all at once.
- Children should get a minimum of 60 minutes of physical activity every day because they are growing and developing their bodies! (Children do not have to be active for 60 minutes all at once.)

What are the health benefits of regular physical activity?

- Makes it easier and more enjoyable to do your daily activities.
- Helps you stay healthy as you get older and even live longer!
- Helps control weight.
- Helps you feel less tense and improves your self-image and mood.
- Reduces feelings of anxiety and depression.
- Helps keep your bones strong.
- Provides an easy way to share an activity with friends or family and an opportunity to meet new friends.

What kind of physical activity should I do?

- Do activities you enjoy...take a walk, ride your bike, or dance with your kids. You may not enjoy housework, but scrubbing floors, washing windows, and vacuuming count too!
- By doing something you like, you will be more likely to include it in your day.

What would help me to become more physically active?

- Having a "buddy" to be active with, whether it is your friend, spouse, child, co-worker, or dog, will make it more fun.
- Setting small goals (increase the number of minutes you are active each week by 5 minutes, one minute a day)
- Write down what you do and how you feel in a notebook. This makes it "real".
- Join a class or a group. Take a swing dancing class or join a local walking group.

When should I be physically active?

- It's up to you! You can be active when it is most convenient for you, just make sure you include it in your day most days of the week.

What are some simple ideas to become more active throughout the day?

- Use the stairs to go up and down instead of the elevator.
- Park a few blocks away from where you are going and walk the rest of the way. If you travel on public transportation, get off a stop or two before your destination.
- Take an activity break. Get up and stretch, walk around and give your muscles and mind a chance to relax.
- Do housework, such as vacuuming, at a more brisk pace.
- Play basketball with your children.
- Take a walk after dinner instead of watching TV. Take the dog!
- Get up to change the channel on the TV instead of using the remote control.
- Walk in place during commercials. Try a few jumping jacks.
- Wash and wax your car by hand, clean out the garage, or plant some flowers.
- Do your own home repair such as painting, wallpapering, or plastering.

How can I motivate my children to do more physical activity?

- Make physical activity fun. Allow your children to choose which games or activities they would like to do.
- Plan and participate in family activities that include physical activity (i.e., walking or bicycling together instead of driving) and include physical activity in family events such as birthday parties, picnics, and

vacations. You can improve your health and enhance relationships at the same time!

- Turn off the television. Set limits on the amount of time children spend watching television and playing video or computer games.
- Be prepared! Keep comfortable shoes and a T-shirt at the office or in your car trunk. Keep a walking partner's phone number handy. You never know when an opportunity will arise.

Common myths about physical activity:

- **Myth #1:** It makes you tired - physical activity gives you more energy than before. Regular, moderate-to-brisk physical activity can also help you reduce fatigue and manage stress.
- **Myth #2:** It takes too much time - it only takes as little as a 10-minute walk three or four times each day, or two 15-minute periods each day.
- **Myth #3:** The older you are, the less physical activity you need - we tend to become less active with age and need to make sure we are getting enough physical activity. Regular physical activity in older persons helps make daily tasks easier.
- **Myth #4:** You have to be athletic - There are several physical activities that don't require any special athletic skills. Try walking; an activity that requires no special talent, athletic ability or equipment.