



Good for You!

Make Every Day Moving Day!

What we eat, day in and day out, is vital to our personal health, our family's health and the well-being of the entire population. But aiming for healthful eating is just one piece of the wellness puzzle. Physical activity is the other side of calorie balance, and most of us need to



find ways to be more physically active. To help that happen, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services released the 2008 Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans, for everyone age 6 years and older. The 2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans emphasize not only healthful food choices, but also increased physical activity, to tackle the risk of common and costly health problems in the U.S., particularly heart disease and type 2 diabetes.

So, let's get a move on!

If thinking about moving more raises questions for you, you aren't alone. Check out the following frequently asked questions to learn why and how every day can be moving day!

Why is increasing our daily physical activity so important?

We know that obesity is a big concern in our country, and choosing healthful foods to eat (limiting energy IN) is a big part in tackling overweight. But the other part of the scale is moving more (increasing energy OUT) to help prevent and fight health issues beyond maintaining a healthy weight. In addition to weight control and reducing risk for chronic diseases, regular physical activity has been shown to reduce the risk for some cancers, strengthen bones and muscles, and improve mental health and mood.



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I don't have the time or the money to go to a gym or join a class. How can I fit more movement into my day?

Consider this – physical activity is anything that gets your body moving. It doesn't have to be expensive or added on to your "to-do" list. Just move enough to get your heart rate up for at least 10 minutes at a time – that's the type of activity that counts toward meeting the physical activity guidelines. Many household chores can count as physical activity – and it's great to feel better about increasing your activity AND checking off those tasks like mowing the lawn, walking the dog, climbing the stairs, or simply parking farther from the door while shopping. Set a great example for your children – instead of sending them to play on the computer or watch TV, how about joining them for an after-dinner walk or bike ride? Everyone will benefit from more "moving beyond" the screen.

I'm older, and I can't move as well as I used to – are the physical activity guidelines really aimed at people like me?

Everyone can gain the health benefits of physical activity - age, ethnicity, shape or size do not matter. If you are physically active in middle age or as an older adult, you have a lower risk of losing the ability to do everyday activities such as climbing stairs, grocery shopping, or playing with your grandchildren than people who are inactive. As an older adult, regular physical activity is one of the most important things you can do for your health. It can prevent many of the health problems that seem to come with age. Aerobic and muscle-strengthening activities can improve your ability to do everyday tasks – even those you may already struggle with.



Not doing any physical activity can be bad for you, no matter your age or health condition. You don't have to be in super physical shape or be able to be active for long periods of time to reap the benefits of physical activity – some is better than none at all! Those health benefits will also increase with the more physical activity you do.

Sources:

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Division of Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Obesity. National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion (2011). *Physical activity for everyone*. Accessed 8/3/12 at <http://www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity/everyone/guidelines/index.html>

Are my kids active enough?

It may seem like children are constantly moving. Though some kids really do pack their day full of active play, we know that most children and



adolescents don't get the daily 60 minutes of physical activity that is recommended. While an hour a day may sound like a lot, don't worry! There are so many easy and enjoyable ways to help your child meet this physical activity goal. Encourage your children to take part in activities that are age-appropriate and offer variety.

Variety is key – kids need three types of activity for all-round health: aerobic activity like brisk walking or running; muscle strengthening activities such as push-ups, games of tug of war, rope or tree climbing, swinging on playground equipment/bars; and bone strengthening activities like hop-scotch, skipping, running, jumping, and sports like gymnastics, basketball, volleyball and tennis.

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