

Here's to You!

Tips for your good health provided by your district

June/July 2019

Get moving: Exercise guidelines for best health

We all know that exercise is important, and we also know that we probably don't spend enough time being physically active. With few exceptions, Americans don't move their bodies enough for optimal health effects.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, about half of adults over 18 meet the federal physical activity guidelines. Only 23.5 percent meet the guidelines for both aerobic and muscle-strengthening activity.

How much exercise do we need?

Most health experts agree that guidelines for exercise are at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity or 75 minutes of vigorous-intensity aerobic exercise per week - or a combination of the two spread out over the entire week. They also suggest strength exercises twice per week. Guidelines for very young children are for structured and unstructured play throughout the day. Children and teens should aim for at least 60 minutes of activity every day. <https://medlineplus.gov/howmuchexercisedoineed.html>

Why is exercise essential?

Endurance, or aerobic, activities, such as walking, biking, running, swimming, etc., increase your breathing and heart rate. They keep your heart, lungs, and circulatory system healthy and improve your overall fitness. Strength training makes your muscles stron-



ger and keeps your metabolism efficient.

Your brain on exercise

The physical benefits of exercise are obvious, but research has also found a strong link between exercise and mental health, specifically a reduced risk of depression and anxiety and improved memory. "A single, moderate workout may immediately change how our brains function and how well we recognize common names and similar information, according to a promising new study of exercise, memory and aging. The study adds to growing evidence that

exercise can have rapid effects on brain function and also that these effects could accumulate and lead to long-term improvements in how our brains operate and we remember. www.nytimes.com/2019/05/01/well/move/how-exercise-affects-our-memory.html

Scientists continue to study brain health and exercise, but the early results should help motivate us to move more, especially to ward off brain decline as we age.

"Scientists found that a 12-week program of treadmill walking changed the working of portions of the brain involved in semantic memory — our knowledge of the world, including recall of names and concepts. After four months of exercise, those parts of the brain became less active during semantic-memory tests, which is a desirable outcome, suggesting that the brain becomes more efficient at processing." <https://nyti.ms/2DNw5FV>

Do you practice good sleep hygiene?



If you are constantly tired, waking up frequently, having difficulty falling asleep and generally fatigued and unrested, you may have poor sleep hygiene.

The National Sleep Foundation defines sleep hygiene as a variety of different practices and habits that are necessary to have good nighttime sleep quality and full daytime alertness. It is important for both physical and mental health and can result in positive benefits for everyone from children to older adults. www.sleepfoundation.org/articles/sleep-hygiene

How much sleep should we get?

Sleep needs vary by age and individual. Young children need much more sleep than adults. The recommended amount of sleep for ages 18-64 is seven to nine hours per night. For adults over 65, it is seven to eight hours. <http://bit.ly/2H0kKEw>

Tips for better sleep hygiene

If you are sleeping less than you should, the following tips from the National Sleep Foundation may help you rest better.

Limiting daytime naps to 30 minutes. Napping does not make up for inadequate nighttime sleep. However, a short nap of 20-30 minutes can help to improve mood, alertness and performance.

Avoiding stimulants such as caffeine and nicotine close to bedtime. And when it comes to alcohol, moderation is key.

Exercising to promote good quality sleep. As little as 10 minutes of aerobic exercise, such as walking or cycling, can drastically improve nighttime sleep quality.

Limiting food right before sleep. Heavy or rich foods, fatty or fried meals, spicy dishes, citrus fruits, and carbonated drinks can trigger indigestion for some people.

Ensuring adequate exposure to natural light. Exposure to sunlight during the day, as well as darkness at night, helps to maintain a healthy sleep-wake cycle.

Establishing a regular relaxing bedtime routine. A regular nightly routine helps the body recognize that it is bedtime. This could include a warm shower or bath, reading a book, or light stretches.

Making sure that the sleep environment is pleasant. Mattress and pillows should be comfortable. The bedroom should be cool – between 60 and 67 degrees. Avoid bright light from lamps, cell phone and TV screens.

Excess sitting can undo the benefits of exercise

A new study found that inactivity during the day can undo the benefits of your daily workout.

Scientists studied the effects of what is sometimes called “The Sitting Disease” to learn more about how the lack of physical activity affects health.

Regular exercise reduces health risks such as heart disease, Type 2 diabetes and other chronic conditions.

“Inactivity, meanwhile, has almost the opposite physiological effects. People who spend most of their waking hours sitting face heightened risks for many chronic diseases. They often also experience metabolic problems that raise the risk of diabetes and heart disease, including insulin resistance, poor blood sugar control and high levels of triglycerides, the fatty acids from food that linger in the blood if they are not metabolized.

While this is still an area of scientific study, the early results show that not moving during the day can make regular workouts ineffective.

