

Nurses Notes on Nutrition
“Tips on Physical Activity”
by Monica Petrella RN

Physical activity goes hand-in-hand with a nutritious diet to maintain a healthy weight. Children and teens should have at least 60 minutes of moderately intense physical exercise several times a week, preferably daily. Besides being fun, physical activity helps to avoid sedentary time and has other health benefits that include: decreasing blood pressure; strengthening bones, helping weight management, reducing stress, and increasing self-esteem.

Children imitate, so be a role model. Here are a few tips for increasing physical activity:

- Spend no more than 2 hours/day watching TV, video games or on the computer. (The American Academy of Pediatrics does not recommend television viewing for children age 2 and under.)
- Go to the library and pick up some tapes/videos on dancing, yoga, aerobics, Zumba or fitness. Include your family!
- Remember those childhood games? Go outside and do them with the family: hopscotch, freeze tag, red light/green light, hide and seek, jump rope to old songs.
- Take a brisk walk with the family/pets and play sight or color games: “Do you see something....?”
- Plant a garden.
- Go to the playground or park.
- Have a scavenger hunt.
- Walk or ride a bike to a neighbor or friend’s house. (instead of driving)
- Plan a neighborhood parade!
- Get involved in sports: soccer, basketball, tennis, football, softball, running!
- Go swimming but review safety rules first!
- Time household chores, be creative and make them fun.
- See the “Home Circuit” I made up on the nurse JKES web site.

Have fun and promote good health through the rewards of physical activity!

(see www.cdc.gov/healthyweight/children/index.html).