



Physical Activity

Research shows that among children and adolescents, 17% are overweight and another 9% are obese. The New England Journal of Medicine reported that "our children's lifespan could be 2-5 years less than our own." Furthermore, the economic burden of physical inactivity is estimated at \$5.3 billion and the burden to the healthcare system is estimated at \$2.1 billion. Canada is facing an inactivity and obesity crisis whose impact on the cost of future chronic disease management is almost unimaginable.

Food and Fitness

Food and fitness go hand in hand. Fueling your body with healthy food choices and exercising will make you feel better and allow your body to work the way it should. It's easy to over-indulge with your favorite food but eating a variety will ensure you are providing your body what it needs to stay energized. Your taste buds change as you age so try new foods and re-try old ones too. Use Canada's Food Guide to help you make healthy choices. Choose water and milk most often. 100%-juice is also a good choice from time to time however limit sugary drinks. Ensure you listen for cues telling you your stomach is comfortably full. Eating too much may make you feel uncomfortable and cause weight gain over time. Limit the amount of time you spend watching TV, DVD's or playing video games as well as computer time. These are all sedentary activities that don't do your body much good. Try to add as much physical activity to your day as possible. Walk, run, play a sport or just have fun with friends.

Let's Get Started

Daily physical activity is easier to incorporate into your day than you think. Try starting your day 15 minutes earlier so that you're not feeling rushed. Sit down with your family and have a healthy breakfast.

Physical activity can be broken down into the following three categories; vigorous, bone strengthening and muscle-strengthening. Incorporating something from each of these categories as well as activities you enjoy gets you the best results. Start slowly and work your way up to 30-60 minutes per day. **Vigorous activities** include skipping, jumping or tennis. **Muscle strengthening** activities include playground play, sit ups/push-ups, free weights or exercise equipment. Choose enjoyable activities at any age:

Pre-School

Be a good role model. Start early, get toddlers moving and don't discourage free play time. Incorporate time to visit local playgrounds and play with your child. Encourage your child to walk rather than using a stroller.

Children

Schedule an adventure walk after dinner or organize neighborhood games. Try having a dance party. Visit your local community center and enjoy the facilities. Play catching games or go for family bike rides.

Youth

Encourage unstructured physical play with friends or enroll in a minor sport. There are many offered at your local community center for a nominal fee. Encourage your child to join school sports teams or try participating in land or water based activities such as skating, skiing, swimming or tubing. Give the dog walking responsibility to your child and tag along. Join your local gym or organized activities such as martial arts, dancing, yoga etc.

Increasing physical activity has many benefits such as decreasing your chances of developing many diseases such as heart disease and type2 diabetes.

People who eat healthy and are physically active are generally healthier and happier people.

Resources:

participation.com
kidshealth.org

Fun Food Facts!



Having a large glass of water before each meal helps kick start your metabolism and may help you to not over eat



Did You Know?



It only takes 10,000 steps a day to be active

Sledding Safety Tips

- ✓ Select a hill that is not too steep and has a flat area at the bottom
- ✓ Avoid hills that are near a parking lot, street, trees, ponds, fences or other hazards
- ✓ Ensure the hill is free of jumps, bumps, rocks and other obstacles
- ✓ Choose to sled on a snowy hill rather than icy
- ✓ Sled during daylight or on a well-lit recreational hill
- ✓ Wear helmets and proper winter clothes
- ✓ Avoid scarves that could get caught and cause strangulation