

healthy families = healthy kids

Many adults and children are leading increasingly inactive lives. We drive to and from work or school. We sit the majority of the day. On the weekends, we spend time watching television or using computers. In addition to not getting enough exercise, we are eating diets that are high in fat and calories while lacking in nutrition.

It is never too early to teach your children about health and nutrition. Current recommendations suggest that children and adults need at least 30 minutes of daily activity at a level high enough to get your heart pumping. This goal can easily be met by encouraging family activities that will provide exercise and fun.

Here are some easy, and fun, ways to help your family stay healthy and strong.

- **Get Your Family Moving** – Take a walk around your neighborhood every day before or after dinner. Plan to visit a local park and play on the playground. Get your family outside by taking a hike, riding bikes, going roller-skating, or swimming.
- **Challenge Your Kids** – Help your children find their athletic talents. Encourage them to join a community sports programs. Challenge them to a family field day and play basketball, volleyball, or tennis together. Children like the idea of competing against and with their parents.
- **Select Active Indoor Activities** – When choosing indoor activities, try to choose things that keep you moving. Go bowling or ice-skating. Stroll through a museum. Even activities like shopping at the mall or at the grocery store can be made into exercise by encouraging your children to walk along with you instead of riding in a cart.
- **Emphasize Fitness and Fun** – Not everyone is a great athlete. Whether or not your family is athletically talented, remind them of the importance of trying their best and having fun while they do so. Even if you are not good at a particular activity, you can have a lot of fun doing it!
- **Allow Free Time** – Encourage informal play. While team sports have value, make sure your children have time to just play. Some of the best ways to promote fitness are through allowing your children to play outside with friends.
- **Be an Active Role Model** – Participate in activities with your child whenever possible. Your children learn the most by watching your behavior.

As parents, you are your child's most influential role model. If your child sees that you are committed to living a healthy lifestyle, they will adapt that behavior in their own life.

