

January 4, 2023

Happy New Year from NDS! This week's Wellness Wednesday Topic is: All Weather Family Activities

Being physically active for at least 60 minutes a day is a great way for kids and adults to stay healthy! Did you know, physical activity does not have to be done all at one time, you can spread activity out throughout the day and still experience its benefits!

Regular physical activity has shown to reduce stress, lower blood pressure, improve sleep, prevent illness and disease, boost mental health and increase academic performance. The key to staying active year round is finding activities that you enjoy and fit the climate and weather.

Outdoor Activities

Cool-Weather Actives



- Take a brisk walk through the neighborhood to enjoy holiday lights.
- Challenge your family and friends to a snow-building competition.
- Join a local harvest party and wander through a corn maze or browse a pumpkin patch.
- Rake leaves or shovel snow to help your family and neighbors.

Warm-Weather Activities



- Play tag or hide-and seek in a park or yard
- Go swimming in a local pool or splash around in sprinklers
- Create “active art” by drawing hopscotch or four-square on the sidewalk with chalk
- Try jumping rope as a family or friends
- Participate in a local race. Support a cause while reaching your physical activity goals!

Indoor Activities



- Turn on some music and have a dance party.
- Act out a scene from a favorite book or movie or put on a play for family members.
- Plant an indoor garden with your favorite herbs, veggies, and flowers.
- Declutter around the house by sorting food, clothes, books and other items.

Activities in Your Community



- Have a scavenger hunt in the mall
- Volunteer to help a friend or neighbor do their grocery shopping and put away their groceries
- Check your local library or community center for recreation classes and events such as yoga, dance, and sports workshops. Some you may even be able to do from home!
- Use stairs and ramp when possible. You could also have a challenge and see who can go up and down the stairs the greatest number of times.



Looking for a fun family activity, try this [At-Home Scavenger Hunt!](#)

January 11, 2023

Greetings from NDS! We hope you are well.

This Wednesday's topic is: PA Harvest of the Month - Eggs

Pennsylvania Harvest of the Month (PA HOM) is a program developed by the Pennsylvania Department of Education and Project PA (Penn State University) to promote a local agricultural product each month.

Facts about Eggs!

- Did you know eggs are among the most nutrient dense foods available, containing about 70 calories and 6 grams of protein per egg? Eggs are made up of two main parts; egg white and yolk. The egg white contains mostly water and protein while the yolk contains the fat and other nutrients.
- Eggs are an excellent source of protein and contain all the essential amino acids, the building blocks of protein that the body needs but cannot make. Eggs are also an excellent source of vitamin A, which promotes eye health and immune function, and vitamin D, which promotes calcium absorption for strong bones and teeth.
- Pennsylvania is among the top five egg-producing states in the U.S. An average hen lays 250 to 300 eggs a year! The breed of the hen determines the color of the egg's shell, while the color of the yolk is determined by the hen's diet.
- Eggs are very versatile and can be cooked using a variety of methods such as poaching, scrambling, frying and baking. Eggs are often used in mixed dishes such as casseroles, baked goods, frittatas, and quiches.

When handling eggs, the following guidelines should be followed:

- Wash utensils, equipment, and work areas with hot, soapy water before and after contact with eggs.
- Do not keep eggs out of the refrigerator for more than 2 hours. Best practice - take them out of the refrigerator as needed.
- Raw eggs and other ingredients, combined according to recipe directions, should be cooked immediately or refrigerated and cooked within 24 hours.
- Eggs should not be eaten raw. If recipes call for raw eggs which are not going to be cooked (e.g. eggnog, ice cream) pasteurized eggs should be used.
- Cook eggs until both the white and yolk are firm
- Casseroles and other dishes containing eggs should be cooked to a safe minimum internal temperature of 160°F.



January 18, 2023

Greetings from NDS! This week's Wellness Wednesday topic is:

National Fiber Focus Month

January is National Fiber Focus Month! Dietary fiber includes all parts of plant foods that your body cannot digest or absorb. You read that right; your body does not actually absorb fiber. There are two different types of dietary fiber: soluble and insoluble. Both play an important role in health, digestion, and preventing diseases.

Soluble Fiber

- Helps lower cholesterol levels by binding to cholesterol in digestive tract and may reduce the risk of heart disease
- Regulates blood sugar levels by slowing digestion and absorption so that carbohydrates from food enter the blood stream more slowly
- Examples of foods rich in soluble fiber include oat bran, fruits, veggies, brown rice, nuts, flax seeds, legumes and barley.

Insoluble Fiber

- Helps keep your body regular by promoting movement of food materials through your digestive system faster and easier. This helps prevent constipation and possibly reduces the risk of colon cancer and hemorrhoids
- Insoluble fibers are found in the skins of fruit, vegetables and legumes as well as wheat bran, whole grain breads and cereals.

How much fiber do you need?

- Adult women need 25 grams a day while men should aim for 38 grams per day.
- Children's need will vary based on energy needs, age, and weight. However, a good rule of thumb is to add 5 to their age to give you a total gram amount. For example, if they are 10 years old, add 5, and you get 15, meaning that child should have about 15 grams of fiber per day.

- Make sure to check the food labels. Select foods with more than 3 grams of fiber per serving.

Foods high in fiber include

- Vegetables, especially peas, broccoli, corn and potatoes
- Fruits especially raspberries, bananas, oranges, and apples and pears with their skin on
- Oats
- Beans and lentils
- Nuts
- Whole wheat products such as bread
- Whole grain cereal
- Popcorn

School Meals

Did you know that the school meals program provides students with opportunities to reach their daily fiber intake goals!

- Breakfast provides daily sources of fiber by offering whole grain entrees such as cereal and muffins and a variety of fruits.
- Lunch offers high fiber foods such as broccoli, potato wedges, green beans, hummus, whole grain bread, and fresh fruit.
- Encourage students to reach for these items when selecting a claimable meal!

Try one of these recipes to increase your fiber intake this month!

- [Chicken and Zucchini Quesadilla](#)
- [Fruit Salsa and Sweet Chips](#)
- [Southwestern Potato Skins](#)

More information!

- For a Fiber Focus handout, including a sample menu, click [here!](#)

- Control + Click on the picture below for ways to incorporate fiber into your diet.



A message from NUTRITIONAL DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

January 25, 2023

Greetings from NDS! This month's Wellness Wednesday topic is:

Starting a Physical Fitness Plan

The New Year often brings New Year's Resolution! Incorporating physical activity into your life can be great for your health!

Physical activity has several benefits including: reducing your risk of chronic disease, improving your balance and coordination, helping you lose weight, and even improving your sleep habits and self-esteem.

Start by determining your reason for being physical active and committing to following through.

The Mayo Clinic has outlined 5 steps to Get Your Fitness Program Started:

1. Assess your fitness level

You probably have some idea of how fit you are. But assessing and recording baseline fitness scores can give you benchmarks against which to measure your progress. To assess your aerobic and muscular fitness, flexibility, and body composition, consider recording:

- Your pulse rate before and immediately after walking 1 mile
- How long it takes to walk 1 mile, or how long it takes to run 1.5 miles
- How many standard or modified pushups you can do at a time
- How far you can reach forward while seated on the floor with your legs in front of you
- Your waist circumference, just above your hipbones
- Your body mass index

2. Design your fitness program

It's easy to say that you'll exercise every day, but you'll need a plan. As you design your fitness program, keep these points in mind:

- **Consider your fitness goals.** Are you starting a fitness program to help lose weight? Or do you have another motivation, such as preparing for a

marathon? Having clear goals can help you gauge your progress and stay motivated.

- **Create a balanced routine.** Get at least 150 minutes of moderate aerobic activity or 75 minutes of vigorous aerobic activity a week, or a combination of moderate and vigorous activity. The guidelines suggest that you spread out this exercise during the course of a week. To provide even greater health benefit and to assist with weight loss or maintaining weight loss, at least 300 minutes a week is recommended.
- But even small amounts of physical activity are helpful. Being active for short periods of time throughout the day can add up to provide health benefit.
- Do strength training exercises for all major muscle groups at least two times a week. Aim to do a single set of each exercise, using a weight or resistance level heavy enough to tire your muscles after about 12 to 15 repetitions.
- **Start low and progress slowly.** If you're just beginning to exercise, start cautiously and progress slowly. If you have an injury or a medical condition, consult your doctor or an exercise therapist for help designing a fitness program that gradually improves your range of motion, strength and endurance.
- **Build activity into your daily routine.** Finding time to exercise can be a challenge. To make it easier, schedule time to exercise as you would any other appointment. Plan to watch your favorite show while walking on the treadmill, read while riding a stationary bike, or take a break to go on a walk at work.
- **Plan to include different activities.** Different activities (cross-training) can keep exercise boredom at bay. Cross-training using low-impact forms of activity, such as biking or water exercise, also reduces your chances of injuring or overusing one specific muscle or joint. Plan to alternate among activities that emphasize different parts of your body, such as walking, swimming and strength training.
- **Try high-interval intensity training.** In high-interval intensity training, you perform short bursts of high-intensity activity separated by recovery periods of low-intensity activity.
- **Allow time for recovery.** Many people start exercising with frenzied zeal — working out too long or too intensely — and give up when their muscles and joints become sore or injured. Plan time between sessions for your body to rest and recover.
- **Put it on paper.** A written plan may encourage you to stay on track.

3. Assemble your equipment

You'll probably start with athletic shoes. Be sure to pick shoes designed for the activity you have in mind. For example, running shoes are lighter in weight than cross-training shoes, which are more supportive.

- You might consider using fitness apps for smart devices or other activity tracking devices, such as ones that can track your distance, track calories burned or monitor your heart rate.

4. Get started

Now you're ready for action. As you begin your fitness program, keep these tips in mind:

- **Start slowly and build up gradually.** Give yourself plenty of time to warm up and cool down with easy walking or gentle stretching. Then speed up to a pace you can continue for five to 10 minutes without getting overly tired. As your stamina improves, gradually increase the amount of time you exercise. Work your way up to 30 to 60 minutes of exercise most days of the week.
- **Break things up if you have to.** You don't have to do all your exercise at one time, so you can weave in activity throughout your day. Shorter but more-frequent sessions have aerobic benefits, too. Exercising in short sessions a few times a day may fit into your schedule better than a single 30-minute session. Any amount of activity is better than none at all.
- **Be creative.** Maybe your workout routine includes various activities, such as walking, bicycling or rowing. But don't stop there. Take a weekend hike with your family or spend an evening ballroom dancing. Find activities you enjoy to add to your fitness routine.
- **Listen to your body.** If you feel pain, shortness of breath, dizziness or nausea, take a break. You may be pushing yourself too hard.
- **Be flexible.** If you're not feeling good, give yourself permission to take a day or two off.

5. Monitor your progress

- Retake your personal fitness assessment six weeks after you start your program and then again, every few months. You may notice that you need to

increase the amount of time you exercise in order to continue improving. Or you may be pleasantly surprised to find that you're exercising just the right amount to meet your fitness goals.

- If you lose motivation, set new goals or try a new activity. Exercising with a friend or taking a class at a fitness center may help, too.
- Starting an exercise program is an important decision. But it doesn't have to be an overwhelming one. By planning carefully and pacing yourself, you can establish a healthy habit that lasts a lifetime.

Control + Click for short video about building good fitness habits

