Wellness Works

Fall 2013

Make Family Fitness a Walk in the Park

Forget pricey gym memberships and boring treadmills. Walking the dog, flying a kite and going to the park are fun outdoor activities that double as workouts. Doing them regularly this fall can help your family stay healthy, for now and for years to come. Children need about an hour of physical activity per day. They learn by watching you. So plan ways to stay moving as a family. You might not think your family has time to exercise. But think about all the things you do instead. Then, find a way to fit in fitness. Turn off the TV after dinner and go for a walk or bike to the library.

Enjoy the great outdoors. Exercise makes you stronger, keeps your weight in check and helps your balance. Taking your family’s workout outside gives you even more benefits. You can connect with nature and so can your kids. You’ll be happier, less stressed and more tuned in to the world around you.

You don’t have to spend a lot of money to have fun outside. Some of the best activities are free. Try taking a hike through your local park. Organize a game of tag in your yard. Watch local calendars for family-friendly events.

Besides the clear physical benefits from exercise, such as increased endurance and strength and maintaining a healthy weight, active children are often more confident. They are also more likely to be successful in their daily school work.

Make staying active as much a part of your family’s daily habit as eating dinner together. That way exercise will be just another part – maybe even the most fun part – of your family routine.

Sources: American Academy of Pediatrics, Let’s Move!

Who Needs Flu Shots?

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention suggests an annual flu vaccine for all people ages 6 months and older. While the vaccine is recommended for nearly everyone, certain groups are at higher risk for complications from the flu, including:

- People ages 65 and older
- Children younger than 6 months old
- Pregnant women
- People with certain ongoing medical conditions, such as diabetes, asthma or heart disease
Is It Time for Your Mammogram?

No woman wants to hear that she has breast cancer. But the sooner the cancer is found, the better her prognosis. Women with smaller tumors and cancer that hasn’t spread beyond their breasts more often survive the disease.

Screening catches cancer early, when treatment can be more successful. Talk with your doctor about the screening schedule that’s right for you. For women at average risk, getting a mammogram every other year after age 50 may work best.

Medical advances have made breast cancer treatment more effective than ever before. Every year, almost 300,000 American women will receive a breast cancer diagnosis. With proper treatment, many of them will soon join the ranks of the 2.6 million breast cancer survivors. These women have heard these four joyful words: “You’re now cancer-free.”

Source: American Cancer Society

Lifestyle Affects Prostate Cancer

In a recent study, men with low-grade prostate cancer adopted healthy habits. They:

• Ate a meatless diet that was rich in soy
• Took fish oil, vitamin E, vitamin C and selenium
• Walked briskly six days a week
• Did relaxation techniques for one hour a day
• Went to a weekly support group

After one year, the men saw a drop in their blood levels of prostate-specific antigen, which measures cancer progression.

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Add Up Healthy Habits to Prevent Diabetes

Healthy habits are the building blocks of a healthy lifestyle. And together, they may slash diabetes risk by 80 percent. In a new study in Annals of Internal Medicine, people with the lowest odds of developing the disease:

• Ate a healthy diet low in saturated and trans fats
• Maintained a normal weight
• Never smoked, or quit more than 10 years ago
• Had less than one alcoholic drink per day for women, or two for men
• Exercised at least 20 minutes three times per week

You can add each habit to your life one at a time and still see benefits.

Sources: Annals of Internal Medicine

Portion Sizes: What’s Right for Your Child?

In this age of giant-sized meals, it’s important to know what portion size is right for young children. Not sure? Research suggests that you may want to let your children choose for themselves.

A study of preschool children showed that when they were served a double portion of macaroni and cheese, the children took larger bites and ate more food. But when the double-sized portion was placed in a serving bowl and the children were allowed to serve themselves, they chose the right amount of food for their ages. And how much macaroni and cheese is that, exactly? For a 3-year-old, about half a cup; for 4- or 5-year-olds, about three-quarters of a cup.

Source: American Journal of Clinical Nutrition