



# Healthy Lifestyles

February 2013

*Hello everyone! February is National Heart Month, which is a natural fit since we celebrate Valentine's Day on the 14<sup>th</sup>. Eating healthy and getting exercise is good for your heart as we all know, but in today's busy and hectic schedule it is often easier said than done. During the winter months when the daylight hours are shorter in the evening it is more difficult to get outside to play. However, there are other ways to get your exercise. Take stairs instead of an elevator and park a little farther away and walk instead of looking for that spot right near the door. Of course these little steps are no replacement for regular exercise but adding them here and there is better than nothing!*

*All of the articles in this newsletter were taken from the American Heart Association's website at [www.heart.org](http://www.heart.org) and there is so much more there. You can find a BMI calculator and many tools and information. You could spend hours there!*

*Happy Valentine's Day! Be heart strong!*

*Donna Smith  
Healthy Lifestyles Chair  
Northside ISD Council of PTAs*

## **PTA Vision**

**Every child's potential is a reality.**

## **PTA Mission**

**To make every child's potential a reality by engaging and empowering families and communities to advocate for all children.**

## **February – National Heart Month**

<https://www.heart.org>

### **American Heart Association Guidelines for Physical Activity**

We suggest at least 150 minutes per week of moderate exercise or 75 minutes per week of vigorous exercise (or a combination of moderate and vigorous activity). Thirty minutes a day, five times a week is an easy goal to remember, however you will also experience benefits even if you divide your time into two or three segments of 10 -15 minutes per day.

Physical activity is anything that makes you move your body and burn calories, such as climbing stairs or playing sports. Aerobic exercises benefit your heart, such as walking, jogging, swimming or biking. Strength and stretching exercises are best for overall stamina and flexibility.

The simplest, positive change you can make to effectively improve your heart health is to start walking. It's enjoyable, free, easy, social and great exercise. A walking program is flexible and boasts high success rates because people can stick with it. It's easy for walking to become a regular and satisfying part of life.

Check out the [Start Walking program](#) to get going with expert advice or to find your "[sole-mate](#)." A partner can help you keep it enjoyable and together you can cheer each other on to reach your goals.

What if I know I won't be able to make it for 30 minutes? Something is always better than nothing! And everyone has to start somewhere. Even if you've been sedentary for years, today is the day you can begin to make healthy changes in your life. If you don't think you'll make it for thirty minutes, set a reachable goal for today. You can work up toward your overall goal of thirty minutes by increasing your time as you get stronger. Don't let all-or-nothing thinking rob you of doing what you can every day.



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## Healthy Snacking

Snacking isn't "bad" if you do it in moderation and make healthy choices.

Healthy, good-for-you snacks can be a part of a healthy diet – which you need to do to live healthfully. To snack the sensible way, choose nutrient-rich snacks like those listed below:

### Crunchy:

- Apples and Breadsticks
- Carrot and celery sticks
- Green pepper sticks
- Zucchini circles
- Radishes
- Broccoli spears
- Cauliflower
- Unsalted rice cakes

### Munchy:

- Unsalted sunflower seeds
- Whole-grain breads or toast
- Cherry or grape tomatoes
- Low-fat or fat-free cheese
- Plain, low-fat or fat-free yogurt
- Bagels
- Unsalted almonds, walnuts and other nuts

### Sweet:

- Unsweetened canned fruit
- Thin slice of angel food cake
- Baked apple
- Raisins
- Dried fruit gelatin gems
- Frozen bananas
- Frozen grapes
- Fresh fruit
- Low-fat or fat-free unsweetened fruit yogurt

## Tips for Increasing Physical Activity

### At Home

- Do housework yourself instead of hiring someone else to do it.
- Work in the garden or mow the grass. Using a riding mower doesn't count! Rake leaves, prune, dig and pick up trash.
- Go out for a short walk before breakfast, after dinner or both! Start with 5-10 minutes and work up to 30 minutes.
- Walk or bike to the corner store instead of driving.
- When walking, pick up the pace from leisurely to brisk. Choose a hilly route.
- When watching TV, sit up instead of lying on the sofa. Or stretch. Better yet, spend a few minutes pedaling on your stationary bicycle while watching TV. Throw away your video remote control.
- Instead of asking someone to bring you a drink, get up off the couch and get it yourself.
- Stand up while talking on the telephone.
- Walk the dog.
- Park farther away at the shopping mall and walk the extra distance. Wear your walking shoes and sneak in an extra lap or two around the mall.
- Stretch to reach items in high places and squat or bend to look at items at floor level.
- Keep exercise equipment repaired and use it!

### At Work

- Brainstorm project ideas with a coworker while taking a walk.
- Create an exercise accountability partnership.
- Walk during business calls when you don't need to reference important documents.
- Stand while talking on the telephone.
- Walk down the hall to speak with someone rather than using the telephone.
- Take the stairs instead of the elevator. Or get off a few floors early and take the stairs the rest of the way.
- Walk while waiting for the plane at the airport.
- Stay at hotels with fitness centers or swimming pools and use them while on business trips.
- Take along a jump rope or a resistance band in your suitcase when you travel. Jump and do calisthenics in your hotel room.
- Download some audio fitness coaching.
- Participate in or start a recreation league at your company.
- Form a sports team to raise money for charity events.
- Join a fitness center or YMCA near your job. Work out before or after work to avoid rush-hour traffic, or drop by for a noon workout.
- Schedule exercise time on your business calendar and treat it as any other important appointment.
- Get off the bus a few blocks early and walk the rest of the way to work or home.
- Walk around your building for a break during the work day or during lunch.

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## Get Non-Athletes to be Physically Active

Team sports are a great way for kids to get their daily activity requirement, but competitive sports aren't for everyone. Here are some ways to encourage your "non-athlete" to get up and get moving.

**Don't make exercise a punishment.** Forcing your child to go out and play may increase resentment and resistance. Try using physical activity to counter something your child doesn't want to do. For instance, make it the routine that your child can ride a bike for 30 minutes before starting homework after school. Your child will beg for 20 more minutes outside just to put off the homework!

**Find an activity they love.** Some kids just don't like competing in sports. That's okay there are lots of other ways to be active! Try swimming, horseback riding, dancing, cycling, skateboarding, yoga, walking or jumping rope. Encourage your child to explore multiple activities to find one they really enjoy.

**Build confidence.** Some kids are embarrassed to participate in sports because they don't think they're good enough. Find time to practice together and boost their confidence.

## 5 Goals to Healthy Eating

1. **Eat more fruits and vegetables.** Aim for 4-5 servings each of fruits and vegetables every day, if you consume a 2,000 calorie diet. Vegetable or 100% fruit juice counts toward this goal.
2. **Eat more whole-grain foods.** Like fruits and vegetables, whole-grain foods are low in saturated fat and cholesterol and rich in fiber. Whole-grain foods include whole-wheat bread, rye bread, brown rice and whole-grain cereal.
3. **Use olive, canola, corn or safflower oil as your main kitchen fat.** Limit how much fat or oil you use in cooking, and use liquid vegetable oils such as olive, canola, corn and safflower oils in place of solid fats.
4. **Eat more chicken, fish and beans than other meats.** In general, skinless poultry, fish and vegetable protein (such as beans) are lower in saturated fat and cholesterol than other meats (beef, pork and lamb).
5. **Read food labels to help you choose healthy foods.** Food labels provide information to help you make better food choices. Learn what information to look for (for example, sodium content) and how to find it quickly and easily.

## Finding Pleasure – Alleviating Stress

When stress makes you feel bad, do something that makes you feel good. Doing things you enjoy is a natural way to fight off stress.

You don't have to do a lot to find pleasure. Even if you're ill or down, you can find pleasure in simple things such as going for a drive, chatting with a friend or reading a good book.

Try to do at least one thing every day that you enjoy, even if you only do it for 15 minutes.

- ❖ Start an art project (oil paint, sketch, create a scrap book or finger paint with grandchildren).
- ❖ Take up a hobby, new or old.
- ❖ Read a favorite book, short story, magazine or newspaper.
- ❖ Have coffee or a meal with friends.
- ❖ Play golf, tennis, ping-pong or bowl.
- ❖ Sew, knit or crochet.
- ❖ Listen to music during or after you practice relaxation.
- ❖ Take a nature walk — listen to the birds, identify trees and flowers.
- ❖ Make a list of everything you still want to do in life.
- ❖ Watch an old movie on TV or rent a video.
- ❖ Take a class at your local college.
- ❖ Play cards or board games with family and friends.

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## Obesity Information

Obesity, a body mass index of 30 or higher).

The term obesity is used to describe the health condition of anyone significantly above his or her ideal healthy weight. Don't be discouraged by the term. It simply means you are 20% or more above your ideal weight and you are not alone. Between 60 and 70% of Americans are either overweight or obese. Being obese puts you at a higher risk for health problems such as heart disease, stroke, high blood pressure, diabetes and more.

### Obesity Statistics

- About 12 million (16.9%) of U.S. children ages 2 to 19 are obese.
- Nearly one in three (31.7%) U.S. children (23,500,000) ages 2 to 19 are overweight or obese.
- Over one-third (33.7%) of U.S. adults are obese (nearly 75 million adults).

*Continued on next column*



**Mayor's Fitness Council**  
City of San Antonio

For information on healthy eating, physical activity events and more, go to [www.fitcitysa.com](http://www.fitcitysa.com)



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## Obesity Information (continued)

### Your healthiest weight

Everyone needs a goal and we need positive reasons to achieve those goals. Even taking off a few pounds can provide you with cardiovascular benefits, so every step in the right direction is a step toward healthier living. Consider these reasons to work toward maintaining a healthy weight.

When your weight is in a healthy range:

- Your body more effectively circulates blood
- Your fluid levels are more easily managed
- You are less likely to develop diabetes, heart disease, certain cancers and sleep apnea.

**Obesity is defined simply as too much body fat.** Your body is made up of water, fat, protein, carbohydrate and various vitamins and minerals. If you have too much fat — especially around your waist — you're at higher risk for health problems, including high blood pressure, high blood cholesterol, diabetes, heart disease and stroke.

- raises blood cholesterol and triglyceride levels.
- lowers HDL "good" cholesterol. HDL cholesterol is linked with lower heart disease and stroke risk, so reducing it tends to raise the risk.
- raises blood pressure levels.
- can induce diabetes. In some people, diabetes makes these other risk factors much worse. The danger of heart attack is especially high for these people.

**Even when there are no adverse effects on the known risk factors, obesity by itself increases risk of heart disease.** It also harms more than just the heart and blood vessel system. It's a major cause of gallstones and can worsen degenerative joint disease.

Obesity is mainly caused by taking in more calories than are used up in physical activity and daily life. When people eat too many calories, or too much saturated fat, trans fat and cholesterol, their blood cholesterol levels often rise. That raises their risk of heart disease.

## Get Moving: Easy Tips to Get Active!

Take the first step. Start with walking! Why? It's easy, it works and it pays!

### It Works

- Studies show that for every hour of walking, life expectancy may increase by two hours.
- Walking for as few as 30 minutes a day provides heart health benefits.
- Walking is the single most effective form of exercise to achieve heart health.