

A focus on **Physical Activity** Pathway to **Improved Health**

Being physically active is one of the most important steps you can take to maintain or improve your health. When combined with eating a healthy diet, regular exercise can substantially reduce your risk of chronic disease, prevent weight gain, and improve your overall level of physical and emotional fitness.

How much physical activity do I need?

The U.S. Department of Health & Human Services (HHS) has recently published several recommendations related to exercise:

1. Any physical activity is better than no physical activity
 - Includes people with disabilities
 - Far outweighs the possibility of risk of injury or illness
2. Most health benefits occur with at least 150 minutes a week
 - Both aerobic (endurance) and muscle-strengthening (resistance) are beneficial
3. For most people, additional benefits occur when
 - You increase the intensity of your physical activity
 - You increase the frequency of your physical activity
 - You increase the duration of your physical activity

Should older adults exercise, too?

The same HHS guidelines apply, but older adults need to make sure that their fitness level and any chronic conditions allow them to safely perform physical activity. For example, if an older adult is at risk of falling, he should do exercises that maintain or improve his balance.

What if I have a chronic medical condition?

If you have a chronic medical condition, you should be under the care of a health care provider. It is important to consult your physician about the type and amount of physical activity appropriate for you.

How do I get started?

The health benefits of physical activity far outweigh the risks and some activity is better than none. Persons who have not been diagnosed with a chronic condition (such as diabetes, heart disease, or osteoarthritis) and do not have symptoms (e.g., chest pain or pressure, dizziness, or joint pain), do not need to consult with a health care provider prior to starting an exercise program.

For more information on total fitness programs in general, you can contact your health care provider, your Concentra health specialist, or visit the National Safety Council's Web site at:

www.nsc.org/resources/Factsheets/hl/fitness.aspx



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