EXERCISE

Moving your body has many benefits. It can:

- Burn calories, which helps people control their weight
- Help control blood sugar levels in people with diabetes
- Lower blood pressure, especially in people with high blood pressure
- Lower stress and help with depression and anxiety
- Keep bones strong, so they don't get thin and break easily
- Lower the chance of dying from heart disease

Adding even small amounts of physical activity to your daily routine can improve your health.

What are the main types of exercise?

There are 3 main types of exercise. They are:

- **Aerobic exercise** – Aerobic exercise raises a person's heart rate. Examples of aerobic exercise are walking, running, dancing, riding a bike, or swimming.
- **Resistance training** – Resistance training helps make your muscles stronger. People can do this type of exercise using weights, exercise bands, or weight machines. You can also do this type of exercise using your own body weight, as with push-ups, or by lifting items in your home, like jugs of water.
- **Stretching** – Stretching exercises help your muscles and joints move more easily.

It's important to have all 3 types of exercise in your exercise program. That way, your body, muscles, and joints can be as healthy as possible.

Should I talk to my doctor or nurse before I start exercising?

If you have not exercised before or have not exercised in a long time, talk with your doctor or nurse before you start a very active exercise program.

If you have heart disease or risk factors for heart disease (like high blood pressure or diabetes), your doctor or nurse might recommend that you have an exercise test before starting an exercise program.

When you start an exercise program, start slowly. For example, do the exercise at a slow pace or for a few minutes only. Over time, you can exercise faster and for longer periods of time.

What should I do when I exercise

Each time you exercise, you should:

- **Warm up** – Warming up can help keep you from hurting your muscles when you exercise. To warm up, do a light aerobic exercise (such as walking slowly) or stretch for 5 to 10 minutes.
- **Work out** – You should try to get a mix of aerobic exercise, resistance training, and stretching. During an aerobic workout, you can walk fast, swim, run, or use an exercise machine, for example. Other activities, like dancing or playing tennis, are also forms of aerobic exercise. You should also take time to stretch all of your joints, including your neck, shoulders, back, hips, and knees. At least 2 times a week, you can do resistance training exercises as part of your workout.
- **Cool down** – Cooling down helps keep you from feeling dizzy after you exercise and helps prevent muscle cramps. To cool down, you can stretch or do a light aerobic exercise for 5 minutes.

Some people go to a gym or do group exercise classes. But you can exercise even without these things. Some exercises can be done even in a small space. You can also try online videos or smartphone apps to get ideas for different types of exercise.

How often should I exercise?

Doctors recommend that people exercise at least 30 minutes a day, on 5 or more days of the week.

If you can't exercise for 30 minutes straight, try to exercise for 10 minutes at a time, 3 or 4 times a day. Even exercising for shorter amounts of time is good for you, especially if it means spending less time sitting.

When should I call my doctor or nurse?

If you have any of the following symptoms when you exercise, stop exercising and call your doctor or nurse right away:

- Pain or pressure in your chest, arms, throat, jaw, or back
- Nausea or vomiting

- Feeling like your heart is fluttering or racing very fast
- Feeling dizzy or faint

What if I don't have time to exercise?

Many people have very busy lives and might not think that they have time to exercise. But it's important to try to find time to exercise, even if you are tired or work a lot. Exercise can increase your energy level, which can make you feel better and might even help you get more work done.

Even if it's hard to set aside a lot of time to exercise, you can still improve your health by moving your body more. There are many ways that you can be more active. For example, you can:

- Take the stairs instead of the elevator
- Park in a parking space that is farther away from the door
- Take a longer route when you walk from one place to another

Spending a lot of time sitting still – for example, watching television or working on the computer – can be bad for your health. Try to get up and move around whenever you can. Even small amounts of movement, like taking short walks, doing household chores, or gardening, can help improve your health. Finding activities you enjoy, or doing them with other people, can help you add more movement into your daily life.

What else should I do when I exercise

To exercise safely and avoid problems, it's important to:

- Drink fluids during and after exercising (but avoid drinks with a lot of caffeine or sugar)
- Avoid exercising outside if it is too hot or cold
- Wear layers of clothes, so that you can take them off if you get too hot
- Wear shoes that fit well and support your feet
- Be aware of your surroundings if you exercise outside