

HEALTHY AGING

Living the Good Life

Being healthy makes life better, no matter your age. The challenge is to help every member of your family develop their health strengths so they can cope both physically and emotionally with daily demands, stressors and pressures.

In this issue of *Your Source*, you'll learn how to keep your family fit and emotionally well, find activities for your family and get tips on how to age successfully.

Characteristics of Strong Families

One trait that all strong families seem to have in common is a solid foundation that family members can rely on to feel safe and secure. The following characteristics can help build a strong family foundation.

Commitment—Commitment is the expectation that the family will be together forever, in good times and when problems come up. Committed families have a sense of belonging and unity. They look toward the future.

Appreciation—Being appreciative is important because it establishes good will between family members as well as builds self-esteem. Showing you care brings family members together.

Communication—The lines of communication are always open in strong families. Information flows freely. Members of strong families make the effort to hear what the other person is saying and understand how the other person is feeling.

Togetherness—Spending meaningful time together gives the family an identity and a sense of unity. Strong families eat, play, work and share activities together.

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To stay healthy, adults should fit this much activity into their schedules:

- A. One hour three times a week
- B. One hour five times a week
- C. 30 minutes a day
- D. 2-1/2 hours a week

Check your answer on the bottom.

Now That's an Idea!

When it comes to getting in shape, what's good for you is good for your whole family. So no matter your age, pry yourself off the couch and start enjoying some activities together:

Kick up your heels. Turn on the music and dance! Nobody's looking, really!

Explore the outdoors. Hit your local trails on weekends for hiking, biking and healthy fresh air.

Exercise your body and brain. Take a class, such as yoga or Tai Chi, or take a nightly walk after dinner. Do brain teasers, such as crossword or Sudoku puzzles.

Use online resources. Check out your program's website for ideas for making smart food choices and more ways to increase your physical activity.

Answer: D. 2-1/2 hours a week (including muscle strengthening two or more times a week) helps to maintain weight; lower blood pressure; lower risk for type 2 diabetes, heart attack, stroke and many cancers; reduce arthritis pain; reduce risk for osteoporosis and falls; and reduce symptoms of depression and anxiety. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Your Fit Family

We know it's important for families to participate in activities together, and we're continually reminded that it's best to help kids develop healthy habits as early as possible. So here are some suggestions that can help make health and wellness a natural part of your family's life:

Get Active with Choices

- Involve everyone by sitting down to a brainstorming session.
- Find out whether anyone has a particular interest and help everyone discover something active that's suited to them.
- Take stock of what equipment you have around the house.
- Make sure each family member feels included.

Schedule Fun

- It's important that there's a regular time set aside for "workouts," and that they're fun!
- Schedule at least a half hour most days of the week and keep a variety of things happening.
- Pick options that are free or within your budget.
- Take turns selecting what you'll do and start a fitness log for each family member.

Find Other Families

- To keep yourself motivated, join with other families for swimming, hiking, skateboarding, miniature golf or going to the park.
- Sign up for local teams or classes.
- Form your own teams within your neighborhood.

Make Mealtime Important

- Never skip breakfast.
- Get into the habit of serving fruit, salad and/or vegetables with each meal.
- Low-fat milk or dairy products should be a part of every meal.
- Eat meals together.

You are in charge of the change. Model good behavior when it comes to not smoking, drinking in moderation, exercising, eating right and finding healthy ways to relax, like reading a book, walking the dog, or listening to music instead of watching the TV.

Living Healthy Working Well®

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Aging Successfully

Successful aging depends on many factors, some of which are within our control and some of which are not.

The following six steps can help older adults stay fit and healthy:

Stay active. With your doctor's help, establish an exercise routine.

Do activities that stimulate the mind. Volunteer, travel, read, learn a new language, do puzzles, play games.

Eat a well-balanced diet. Good nutrition is a key factor.

Be social. Spend time with family and friends, join peer groups or take a class.

Keep a positive attitude. A good mental outlook often translates to good health.

Have a support system. Maintain both informal and formal support systems—friends and family as well as doctors and other professionals to whom you can turn.

In addition, when you stop smoking, eat more fruits and vegetables, drink in moderation and stay active, you will feel better and add years to your life.

