# GET MOVING! THE IMPORTANCE OF PHYSICAL EXERCISE

Along with a healthy diet, exercising on a regular basis is a crucial factor in maintaining your overall health. Unfortunately, many people do not get enough physical activity in their daily life. In fact, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), less than half of American adults get enough physical exercise.

## Health Benefits

Being physically active improves your health and reduces the risk of chronic diseases. These disease states include diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and certain cancers.

Listed below are some other benefits of exercise:

- strengthens bones and muscles
- improves mental health and mood
- manages stress and tension
- boosts physical energy levels

## Different Types of Physical Activity

There are two types of physical activity: aerobic and muscle strengthening.

*Aerobic:* Also known as "cardio", aerobic exercises are activities that will increase breathing and heartbeat. Walking, riding a bike, running, and swimming are all considered to be aerobic exercise.

*Muscle-strengthening:* Exercises that work and strengthen the muscle groups in your body are also necessary. These muscle groups include legs, hips, back, abdomen, chest, shoulders, and arms. Examples of these activities include push-ups, sit-ups, lifting weights, and yoga.

## Guideline Recommendations

The CDC recommends the following:

Children 6 – 17 years of age should exercise for at least 60 minutes every day. This time frame should consist of aerobic exercises and muscle strengthening activities.

Adults up to 64 years of age need at least 150 minutes of physical exercise every week. This exercise should be aerobic and of moderate intensity. Muscle-strengthening activities should also occur at least two days a week.

Older adults over 65 years of age should still complete 150 minutes of physical activity per week as long as health conditions permit. These exercises should also be both aerobic and muscle strengthening.

## Helpful Tips for Successful Exercise

1) Start slowly. Build up to longer and more intense workouts.
2) Make time. Working out at the same time every day can help create a routine.
3) Work out with a partner. Ask your friends and family to join you or join an exercise group.
4) Make small changes. Take the stairs instead of the escalator, or try walking instead of driving.
5) Have fun. Choose a variety of activities that are enjoyable to you.
6) Don't get discouraged. If you miss a day, just start again the next day.
7) Celebrate your successes. Reward your hard work and milestones with non-food prizes.

All recommendations listed above are in agreement with the *2008 Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans*. However, be sure to speak with your physician before starting any exercise regimen.