

Physical Fitness/Wellness



Fitness is very important for good health. Besides feeling better mentally, exercising can help protect you from heart disease, stroke, obesity, diabetes, and high blood pressure; and it can make you look younger, increase and maintain bone density, improve the quality of your life, and may keep you from getting sick. Exercising also helps you control stress better, and can make you feel happier and less nervous.

Before you start an exercise routine, ask your doctor about what exercises to do. Then make a plan to spend less time in front of the television and/or computer, and begin exercising more. Your doctor may suggest that you begin by doing little things first, such as parking in the farthest corner of your parking lot at work, taking the stairs rather than the elevator, taking your dog for a walk, or riding a stationary bike. Little by little, adding daily exercise will help you begin to feel better.

Eating healthy foods is important for good health, too. Changing the kinds of food you eat means paying attention to *what* you eat and *how much* you eat. Depending on your location of employment, it may be nearly impossible to get healthy food from vending machines or in a cafeteria, so you will need to be smart and make a good food plan for yourself. It is important to eat a healthy breakfast; eat more fruits, vegetables, salads, whole-grain breads, and egg whites; and foods that are boiled or grilled – not fried. Ask your doctor or a dietician about starting a healthy, balanced diet.

Another new and exciting program is **Michigan Steps Up**. This program is run by the Michigan Department of Community Health and the Michigan Surgeon General's Office, and provides information about eating healthy, how to stop smoking, and ways to help you exercise more. You can sign up for a free magazine – *Make Health Your Choice*, and a free e-Newsletter – *MI Healthy Living*. You may also create your own personal plan on their Web site to help you set health goals for yourself – and it's free! For more information about the Michigan Steps Up program, visit www.michiganstepsup.org, or you may call them at 1-877-422-4244.

Other Web sites worth checking out are:

- Working on Wellness (WOW) http://www.michigan.gov/mdcs/0,1607,7-147-22854_24290---,00.html
- The Governor's Council on Physical Fitness, Health and Sports (www.michiganfitness.org)
- League of Michigan Bicyclists (www.lmb.org)
- Rails-to-Trails Conservancy (www.railstrails.org)
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. How much physical activity do you need? <http://www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity/everyone/guidelines/index.html>