Healthy living: diet and exercise advice

Healthy living involves eating properly, physical activity, and mental and emotional well-being. If you're searching for ways to improve your overall health and change your lifestyle, you're not alone. According to a new Statistics Canada study, fewer than one in 10 young people, and only 15% of Canadians as a whole, get enough exercise. Here's what you can do to help ensure that you stay as healthy as possible.



Eating well

Canada's Food Guide is one of the best tools to help guide you towards a healthy diet, but you can also easily find many other helpful resources online. Here are some great tips to help you embrace healthy living:

- **Eat whole-grain foods (whole oats, brown and wild rice, quinoa, barley, rye, whole grain pasta or whole grain bread).** Over 40 studies that looked at 20 different types of cancer suggested that regularly eating whole grains reduces the risk of cancer.
- **Use a non-hydrogenated margarine instead of butter or regular margarine.** Non-hydrogenated fats can help reduce cholesterol, which reduces the risk of heart disease and stroke.
- **Eat at least five portions of fruits and vegetables each day.** This reduces the risk of stroke, diabetes, heart disease and cancer.
- **Include fish as a main dish at least once a week.** Fish reduces your risk of suffering from a heart attack.
- **Reduce or eliminate coffee intake if you are pregnant or have high blood pressure.** For everyone else, moderate amounts of coffee may reduce your chances of Parkinson's disease and colon cancer.
- **Drink alcohol in moderation.** Studies have shown that a glass of wine or beer daily may protect against heart attack. Some studies suggest that red wine is particularly effective.
- **Understand the purpose of multivitamins**. Talk to your doctor or a registered dietician if you are concerned about getting sufficient nutrition in your diet before taking any vitamins.

Exercising more

By accumulating 30 minutes or more of moderate-intensity physical activity over the course of most days of the week, you can be sure to increase your energy, improve your health and work toward losing any unwanted pounds.

- **Incorporate more activity into your daily routine** by walking stairs (instead of taking the elevator), gardening, raking leaves, dancing or mall walking while shopping. You can also carry a grocery basket rather than pushing a cart (when applicable), park in the farthest parking spot and walking to the office or store, or carry or push a golf bag instead of taking a cart while golfing.
- **Take up a sport.** Call your local municipality's parks and recreation department and find out about local sports leagues that may interest you.
- **Play with your kids.** Consider fun activities for the whole family, such as in-line skating, swimming or riding a bike.
- **Clean your house.** Vacuuming, mopping and dusting can be quite a workout.

Before you make any major changes to your diet and/or activity levels, be sure to discuss your options with your doctor. He or she will be able to help you design a program best suited for you.