

# 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.