



## **Physical Activity**

Increasing numbers of women are overweight or obese. Being overweight or obese increases your risk of heart disease, type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, stroke, breathing problems, arthritis, gallbladder disease, sleep apnea (breathing problems while sleeping), osteoarthritis, and some cancers. Obesity is measured with a body mass index (BMI). BMI shows the relationship of weight to height. Women with a BMI of 25 to 29.9 are considered overweight, whereas women with a BMI of 30 or more are considered obese. All adults (aged 18 years or older) who have a BMI of 25 or more are considered at risk for premature death and disability from being overweight or obese. Your health care provider can help you figure out your body mass.

### **Benefits of Daily Exercise**

- Reduces risk of dying from heart disease or stroke
- Lowers risk of getting heart disease, stroke, high blood pressure and diabetes
- Lowers blood pressure
- Keeps bones, muscles, and joints health (in turn helping prevent osteoporosis)
- Reduces anxiety levels and depression and helps improve mood
- Stress reducer
- Weight control
- Increases energy levels
- Better sleep

### **Steps You Can Take to Get Moving (It's easy to add 30 minutes of physical activity into your day!)**

- Choose an activity that's fun.
- Change your activities, so you don't get bored.
- Doing housework gets you moving! So does gardening, yard work, and walking the dog.
- If you can't set aside one block of time, do short activities during the day, such as three, 10-minute walks.
- Create opportunities for activity, such as parking your car farther away, taking the stairs instead of the elevator, or walking down the hall to talk to a coworker instead of using e-mail.
- Don't let the cold weather keep you on the couch! You can still find activities to do in the winter like exercising to a workout video or joining a sports league. Or get a head start on your spring cleaning by choosing active indoor chores like window washing or reorganizing closets.
- Use different jogging, walking, or biking paths to vary your routine.
- Exercise with a friend or family member.

- If you have children, make time to play with them outside. Set a positive example!
- Set specific, short-term goals, and reward yourself when you achieve them.
- Don't feel badly if you don't notice body changes right away.
- Make your activity a regular part of your day, so it becomes a habit.
- Build a community group to form walking clubs, build walking trails, start exercise classes, and organize special events to promote physical activity.

## **Resources:**

Women's Health.gov from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
<http://www.4woman.gov/BodyImage/active.cfm> 1-800-994-9662

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: Division of Nutrition and Physical Activity  
<http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/> 1-800-311-3435