



PRESS RELEASE FOR LOCAL MEDIA

Central Michigan District Health Department

"Promoting Healthy Families, Healthy Communities"

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TO: Senior Newsletter

FROM: Shelli Wolfe, Health Educator

Release Date: April/May 2011

RE: Health and Fitness Month for Older Adults

Making exercise a regular part of your daily routine will have a positive impact on your health and your quality of life as you get older. Staying physically active and exercising regularly can relieve depression, and prevent or delay some types of cancer, heart disease, and diabetes. Long-term, regular exercise can even improve health for some older people who already have diseases and disabilities. Check with your doctor before starting any new exercise plan.

Being physically active can also help you stay strong and fit enough to keep doing the things you like to do and stay independent as you get older. For example, improving endurance can make it easier to work in the garden. Increasing muscle strength can make it easier to lift a grandchild or climb stairs. Improving balance helps prevent falls, and being more flexible can help you reach for items on kitchen shelves.

Exercise is safe for almost everyone. In fact, studies show that people with arthritis, high blood pressure, diabetes, or heart disease benefit from regular exercise and physical activity. In some cases, exercise actually can improve some of these conditions.

Even if you haven't exercised in years, you can still start getting more physically active now. You are more likely to become active on a regular basis if you choose activities you enjoy, activities you believe you'll benefit from, and activities you can do safely and correctly. It is

important to start out at a low level of effort and work your way up slowly. For example, you may want to start with walking, biking, or swimming at a comfortable pace and then gradually increase. An overall guideline is to achieve at least 30 minutes of activity on most or all days of the week.

To get started set small, realistic goals. You can check your progress and reward yourself when you reach your goals. Exercising every day is best, but doing any type of extra movement is better than doing nothing at all. Once you start being physically active, you'll begin to see results in just a few weeks and feel stronger and more energetic than before. You may notice that you can do things more easily, faster, or for longer periods of time than before.

Try to choose activities that include all four types of exercise -- endurance, strength, balance, and flexibility -- because each type has different benefits. Endurance exercises like walking, swimming, or jogging will make it possible for you to walk farther, faster and uphill. Strength exercises such as weight lifting will strengthen your muscles and make you stronger. Balance exercises, like standing on one foot, can help prevent falls. Flexibility exercises like yoga help keep your body limber and flexible.

You are more likely to stick with regular exercise and physical activity when you can see the benefits. Most people make rapid progress soon after they start to exercise, and it's encouraging to see your scores improve after just a month. The best way to stay physically active is to make it a life-long habit by following these basic guidelines: Make it a priority, make it easy, make it safe, make it social, make it interesting, and fun.

For additional information about fitness for older adults, visit this website

<http://nihseniorhealth.gov/exerciseforolderadults/toc.html>.

This article has been brought to you by the Central Michigan District Health Department, which serves the residents in Arenac, Clare, Gladwin, Isabella, Osceola, and Roscommon Counties.

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