Overweight Adults and Exercise

Over 60% of Michigan adults are classified as “overweight” or “obese”, according to a Behavioral Risk Factor Survey conducted in 2004. Smoking, diabetes, being overweight, high blood pressure, high cholesterol and lack of exercise are all major risk factors for cardiovascular disease, such as heart disease and stroke.

Let’s take a look at one of these risk factors…Exercise, or physical activity. At the very least, adults should engage in 30 minutes of moderate or vigorous exercise each day. If possible, try for 60 minutes most days of the week to help maintain a healthy weight or lose weight. Examples include: walking, golfing, bicycling, running/jogging, swimming, aerobics, yard work, and weight lifting. However, what we find is that too many of us use the excuse “I don’t have time to exercise.” Even though it is recommended to have 30 minutes of continuous exercise, some experts suggest breaking up the 30 minutes into smaller segments throughout the day, such as 10 minutes in the morning, 10 minutes during the lunch hour, and 10 minutes in the evening. In addition, implementing simple behavior changes in your daily life, such as taking the stairs instead of the elevator or parking further away from the building, provide some physical activity for you.

The benefits of regular physical exercise are numerous. People who exercise on a regular basis tend to feel better, have less stress, more self-confidence, lower their risk for cardiovascular disease, build muscle and improve endurance. “Your body, mind and spirit all need exercise. Exercising one strengthens the other two. Exercising for physical fitness is the least expensive way to achieve inner strength,” states Dr. Robert Graham, Medical Director for Central Michigan District Health Department.

Michigan is one of 28 states in the nation to implement a healthy lifestyle program. The Michigan Steps Up program (http://www.michigan.gov/surgeongeneral) contains information on
exercise and nutrition. Schools, businesses, faith-based organizations, communities and individuals can utilize the materials to create plans and encourage others to implement healthy choices in their life.

For more information on the importance of physical activity and ideas on how to achieve 30 minutes per day, log onto http://www.mypyramid.gov or http://www.americanheart.org.

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.