

Nutrition News

VOLUME 6, No. 3

A COMMUNITY NUTRITION PROGRAMS NEWSLETTER

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Eat Vegetables, Move More: Jump Into Spring With Physical Activity

Now that winter is over and spring is here, it is time to get moving with physical activity. You and your family can enjoy the warm weather and do outdoor activities together.

The 2005 Dietary Guidelines recommend daily physical activity as part of a healthy lifestyle. Adults need at least 30 minutes and children need at least 60 minutes. The spring weather makes it easier to do physical activity. Many options for outdoor activities are possible when its warm and breezy.

Outdoor Physical Activities to Enjoy in Spring

1. Play kickball, basketball or other sport with the kids.
2. Walk, jog or run around the block.
3. Ride a bike or rollerblade around the block.
4. Swim with friends.
5. Plant a garden.
6. Mow the grass.

Outdoor activities have the same benefit as indoor activities, but also provide a chance to enjoy the spring weather. You can hear the birds singing and smell the new flower blooms. It is relaxing and will help increase the stress relief that exercise provides. Some other benefits you and your family could get from being physical active include:

1. Improved energy level
2. Improved weight loss and weight control
3. Decreased risk of heart disease, high blood pressure, type 2 diabetes, colon cancer and osteoporosis
4. Decreased stress and tension
5. Decreased feelings of anxiety and depression
6. Improved self-image

Quick Tips to Make Outdoor Physical Activity Fun for Everyone

1. Always have water on hand to drink to stay hydrated.
2. Find a safe place to exercise – backyard, church yard, school playground or park are possibilities.
3. Check out the area to make sure the ground is safe and free from dangers such as limbs and rocks.
4. Wear tennis shoes and safe, comfy clothes in layers. Remove ear rings, rings and necklaces.
5. Avoid the hottest time of the day or try to exercise in the shade. Wear sun glasses and even a hat.

Don't miss exercise on rainy days. In Louisiana the beautiful spring weather can turn rainy quickly. Don't use bad weather as an excuse to skip your daily physical activity. Instead, make sure you have indoor activities saved for the rainy day. Remember - "rain checks" are not allowed when it comes to physical activity.

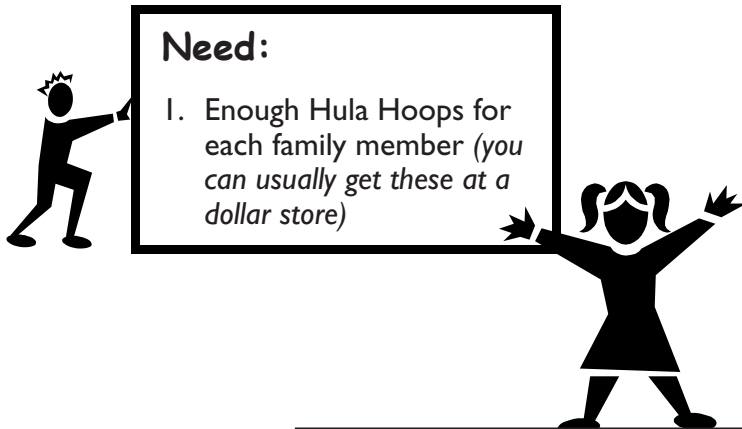
Rainy Day Physical Activities:

1. Dance around the house to the radio or your favorite music.
2. Work on household chores – sweep, mop, dust or vacuum.
3. Walk around the mall or a shopping center nearby.
4. Stretch and exercise indoors – side bends, sit ups and jumping jacks are good.



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Family Fun Activity • Hula Hoop Challenge



Need:

1. Enough Hula Hoops for each family member (*you can usually get these at a dollar store*)

Instructions:

1. Assign a family member to be the announcer and say, "Get ready, set, Hula Hoop!"
2. Give each family member a Hula Hoop.
3. Each family member should put the Hula Hoop around their waist and get ready to Hula Hoop.
4. The announcer says "Get ready, set, Hula Hoop!"
5. Everyone starts Hula Hooping.
6. The last person left Hula Hooping wins.

Make sure to check with your doctor before beginning an exercise routine.

Resources:

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and U.S. Department of Agriculture. Dietary guidelines for Americans, 2005. 6th Edition, Washington, DC.: U.S. Government Printing Office, January 2005.

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. CDC Physical activity for everyone Web site. Available at <http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/physical/index.htm>. Accessed on April 1, 2007.

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April 2007

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Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension work, Acts of Congress of May 8 and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the United States Department of Agriculture. The Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service provides equal opportunities in programs and employment.

This material was partially funded by USDA's Food Stamp program. The Food Stamp program provides nutrition assistance to people with low income.

To find out more, contact your parish agent.