Practice healthy habits to maintain your family’s health and wellness.

As a parent, you can help set the stage and be a role model for your kids. If you live a healthy lifestyle, you can inspire your kids to do the same. And working as a team can help you achieve good health together!

Encourage activity.
For adults, getting regular physical activity can help you lose weight, boost your heart health and help your body better manage stress. And when kids get regular physical activity, they tend to have stronger bones and muscles, and less body fat. Here are some guidelines:

- Get at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic activity each week, such as brisk walking, biking or dancing. Aim for at least 10 minutes at a time when working to achieve those minutes.
- On at least two days a week, include moderate- or high-intensity activities that work all your major muscle groups: Legs, hips, back, abdomen, chest, shoulders and arms.

Need some ideas to get started? Below are tips to help your family get and stay active:

- Be active for 60 minutes or more each day. Most of those minutes should include moderate-intensity activities, such as jumping rope, swimming or brisk walking. Include vigorous-intensity activities at least three days a week.
- Keep a family activity log on the refrigerator. This can help inspire everyone to stay active.
- Sign family members up for low-cost recreation programs and sports leagues.
- Skip driving. Bike or walk as a family, when possible.
- For special events, get active. Go hiking or have a dance contest.

Promote healthy eating.
Eating a healthy diet can help your family members reduce the risk for chronic conditions and keep a healthy weight. And children need proper nutrition to grow and stay healthy. Dietary guidelines recommend that most healthy Americans:

- Eat an assortment of fruits and vegetables
- Make at least half their grains whole grains
- Include fat-free or low-fat milk dairy or other fortified dairy-like beverages such as soy milk
- Enjoy a variety of proteins such as nuts, legumes (beans and peas), lean meat and poultry
- Add healthy oils such as olive and canola oil

Below are tips to help make good nutrition a family affair:
- Try making more meals at home.
- Put everyone to work in the kitchen. Even young children can help with tasks like choosing fruit for dessert, tossing a salad and setting or clearing the table.
- Eat together. Families who do may have stronger ties and children may have higher self-confidence. Plus, you control what’s on the plate.

1. If you’re pregnant, physically inactive or have a health condition such as arthritis, diabetes or heart disease, check with your doctor before starting an exercise program or increasing your activity level. He or she can tell you what types and amounts of activities are safe for you.
2. These guidelines are not intended for infants or young children. For more information, visit choosemyplate.gov or the American Academy of Pediatrics at aap.org.

Sources
- Updated January 9, 2017

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