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YOUTH HEALTH BULLETIN

MAY 2010

Activity and your heart

Make a fist with your hand and hold it out in front of you. This is about the size of your heart! You may be surprised to learn that such an important and hard-working body part is so small.

The heart is the strongest muscle in your body, and it pumps blood through your body every day of your life. This squeezing, and relaxing is the heart "beat." The average heart beats 100,000 times a day!

You should try to include an hour of activity into your day most days of the week. All activities that get you moving are good and should be included in your day. Some help to keep your heart healthy, some keep your muscles strong, and others keep you from sitting around too much. Try to include a variety of physical activities into your day.

Continued on the back



Hello Wild Cubs and Wild Cats! Physical activity is good for your heart. You should try to include an hour of activity every day!



Include one hour of activity every day!

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Everyday activities

There are little things you can do to stay active throughout the day. We call these “everyday” activities. Try adding in a few new “everyday” activities each day. This would be like playing outside when the weather allows.



Recreational activities

Recreational activities can help to make the heart strong. It is best to do these types of activities three to five times a week for at least 20 minutes. Here are some examples: relay races, basketball, volleyball, kickball, soccer, walking, swimming, skipping, hiking, jumping rope, biking, jumping jacks, skating, and running.



Leisure and playtime activities

When we participate in activities that involve a lot of moving but don't work the heart as hard as recreational activities, we call these “leisure, or playtime activities.” Some examples of leisure, or playtime, activities: miniature golf, canoeing, tumbling, and fishing.



Strength and flexibility activities

Strength and flexibility activities are important parts of a physical activity program and healthy lifestyle. You should do strength and flexibility activities two to three times per week. Here are some activities that can improve strength and flexibility: martial arts, rope climbing, ballet/dance, stretching, pull-ups, and push-ups.



Sitting around activities

There are many activities that involve a lot of sitting around. If sitting around activities are done too much and replace physical activities, they can lead to being unhealthy. Here are a few examples of activities to do less often:

- Sitting for more than 30 minutes at a time
- Playing video and computer games
- Surfing the Internet
- Watching television

Adapted from GMK: Hard-Working Hearts Youth Health Lesson

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