



Celebrate the Beauty of Youth



You lead a busy life. Being young is exciting, but it can also be a bit hectic. So many things to take care of! Getting the little ones ready in the morning and tucked in bed at night, juggling work tasks, keeping in touch with your parents, and spending quality time with your partner may leave you with little time for yourself. This tip sheet, part of the Sisters Together Series, will give you ideas on how to stay active, healthy, and strong during this exciting phase of your life.

Why should I move more and eat better?

Being physically active and making smart food choices is good for your health. But moving more and eating better have lots of other benefits as well. They can help you do the following:

- Feel good about yourself and have more energy.
- Look good in the latest fashions.
- Prevent weight gain and related health problems like heart disease and diabetes.
- Reduce stress, boredom, or the blues.
- Tone your body (without losing your curves).



How can I move more?

Physical activity can be fun! Do things you enjoy, like

- dancing
- fast walking
- group fitness classes, such as dance or aerobics
- running



If you can, be physically active with a friend or a group. That way, you can cheer each other on, have a good time while being active, and feel safer when you are outdoors. Find a local school track or park where you can walk or run with your friends, or join a recreation center so you can work out or take a fun fitness class together.



Think you don't have time for physical activity? The good news is that you can still benefit from being active for short periods of time throughout the day—even 10 minutes at a time. When fitting in physical activity, remember that any activity is better than none. So try to move more by making these small changes to your daily routine:

- Get off the bus or subway one stop early and walk the rest of the way (be sure the area is safe).
- Go for a walk during breaks or at lunchtime while at work, if your schedule permits.
- Play with your kids—dance, jump rope, play hide-and-seek or tag.
- Put physical activity on your to-do list for the day. For example, plan on exercising right after work, before you can get distracted by dinner or going out.

What if I don't want to mess up my hair?

If you avoid physical activity because you don't want to ruin your hairstyle, try

- a natural hairstyle, short haircut, braids, twists, or locs
- a scarf to wrap around hair while you exercise, then blow-dry your hair to remove moisture and remove the wrap
- a style that can be wrapped or pulled back

TIP: Day-to-day activities can cause salt build-up in your hair. To remove salt, shampoo with a mild, pH-balanced product at least once a week. For more tips on keeping natural, relaxed, or braided hairstyles looking good during and after exercise, see Hair Care Tips for Sisters on the Move. See the Resources section for a website link.

How can I eat better?

Eating healthy can be hard when you don't have time to cook or a fast food place appears around every corner. Here are some simple things you can do to eat better:

- Start every day with breakfast. Try oatmeal topped with berries and a few walnuts, or whole-wheat toast with a teaspoon of peanut butter or fruit spread.
- Fill half of your plate with fruits and vegetables.
- Choose whole grains like 100 percent whole-wheat bread, brown rice, or oatmeal instead of refined bread, pasta, and rice.
- Choose low-fat dairy products or substitutes like soy milk with added vitamin D and calcium.
- Pack a healthy lunch for work. If you love sandwiches, use a variety of whole-grain breads, pitas, and wraps. Choose lean fillings like lean meats, low-fat cheese, sliced eggs, or tuna fish with assorted greens, onions, sliced cucumbers, and/or tomatoes.
- Reduce sodium (salt), which can increase your blood pressure. Aim for 1,500 mg a day (about 2/3 teaspoon, including what you eat in processed foods).



Many people think that bigger is better. We are so used to value-sized servings that it is easy to eat more than our bodies need. Eating smaller portions will help you cut down on calories and fat (and might save you money, too).

If you want to eat a favorite food or treat once in a while, eat small portions. Here are sensible serving sizes:

- cheese pizza—two small slices or one large slice

- french fries—one small serving (equal to a child’s order)
- ice cream—ask for the kiddie cone

TIP: Make sure you are getting enough folate, a B vitamin that helps the body make healthy new cells and prevents birth defects in babies. Dried beans and peas, fortified cereals, fruits (like citrus fruits and juices), and leafy green vegetables (like spinach and turnip greens) are all good sources. Taking a multivitamin that has folic acid (a form of folate) may also be helpful. Most women should get 400 micrograms a day. If you are pregnant, aim for 600 micrograms a day.

Can I still have my favorite foods and drinks as part of a healthy eating plan?

You can enjoy your favorite foods and drinks in healthy ways when you’re hanging out with your friends and kids, whether at home or out and about. Try these tips:

- Order vegetable toppings like mushrooms, peppers, and spinach instead of salty, high-fat meats like pepperoni or sausage when you want to eat pizza.
- Remember that, while alcohol may have benefits in moderate amounts, it is also a source of calories and may contain sugars as well. Limit your alcoholic beverages to one drink a day.



TIP: Sometimes you may eat without paying attention to how much you are eating or whether you are really hungry. You may do this because you are distracted in front of the TV or because you are bored, nervous, or sad. Be aware of when, where, and why you eat, and try to eat balanced meals throughout the day.



Have a recipe makeover potluck!

Invite some friends over and have them bring their favorite dishes “made over” for eating healthy.

Each person can explore changing a favorite recipe by using

- low-fat cheese or milk instead of whole-milk dairy products
- oil instead of butter or shortening (or using a reduced amount of fat)
- whole grains instead of refined grains

You may also brighten casseroles and pastas with color and enrich them with vitamins and fiber by adding your favorite vegetables like carrots or red peppers.

Have a chat to discuss whose recipe turned out the best. You may all create brand new, healthy tastes that you love!

Celebrate Youth!

Enjoy these action-packed years! Love, laugh, spend time with your kids, family members, and friends. Support each other in staying healthy, active, and strong!

Resources

2008 Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). Discusses the benefits of physical activity and the types and amounts that Americans need to stay healthy: <http://www.health.gov/paguidelines>.

Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2010. HHS and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). Provides detailed information on how to improve your eating habits: <http://www.health.gov/DietaryGuidelines>.

Hair Care Tips for Sisters on the Move. Offers tips for African American women about styling and caring for hair while being physically active: <http://cdn1.sph.harvard.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/135/2012/09/sisters.pdf>.

MyPlate. USDA. Provides many resources, including online tools for finding out how many calories you need and suggestions on eating and physical activity. The menu planner can help you make healthier meals based on federal dietary guidelines: <http://www.choosemyplate.gov>.

National Diabetes Education Program. Publications offer information about diabetes and obesity prevention and control. The catalog also offers resources specifically for African Americans: 1-888-693-6337 or <http://www.yourdiabetesinfo.org>.

National Kidney Disease Education Program. Publications provide information about detecting and managing kidney disease, as well as the impact of kidney disease on African Americans: <http://nkdep.nih.gov/resources.shtml>.

Why should I participate in clinical trials?

Clinical trials are research studies involving people. Clinical trials look at safe and effective new ways to prevent, detect, or treat disease. Researchers also use clinical trials to look at other aspects of care, such as improving the quality of life for people with chronic illnesses. To learn more about clinical trials, why they matter, and how to participate, visit the NIH Clinical Research Trials and You website at <http://www.nih.gov/health/clinicaltrials>. For information about current studies, visit <http://www.ClinicalTrials.gov>.

The Sisters Together Series includes the following publications:

- *Celebrate the Beauty of Youth!*
- *Energize Yourself and Your Family!*
- *Fit and Fabulous as You Mature*
- *Sisters Together Program Guide: Move More, Eat Better*
- *Walking... A Step in the Right Direction* (also available in Spanish)

Weight-control Information Network

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The Weight-control Information Network (WIN) is a national information service of the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases (NIDDK), part of the National Institutes of Health (NIH). WIN provides the general public, health professionals, and the media with science-based, up-to-date, culturally relevant materials and tips. Topics include how to consume healthy foods and beverages, barriers to physical activity, portion control, and eating and physical activity myths. Publications produced by WIN are carefully reviewed by both NIDDK scientists and outside experts. This tip sheet was also reviewed by Mark Johnson, M.S.S.W., Lexington-Fayette County Health Department, Lexington, KY.

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