



DIETITIAN'S CORNER



A Monthly Newsletter by BMA Dietitian Arelis Torres



Celebrating National Physical Activity and Sports Month

National Physical Fitness and Sports Month is celebrated in May. There are multiple ways to be physically active! You can enjoy a walk in the park, take online yoga classes or even do some gardening. Being active does not have to be difficult or boring. It is important to be realistic, find what works best for you and you find most exciting.

There are three types of physical activity that can help you stay healthy: **aerobic, muscle strengthening and balance**. The CDC recommends at least 150 minutes of aerobic exercise per week plus two days of muscle strengthening activities.

Pay attention to these tips to help you be active during this spring season!

Tips to help you be active:

- **Some physical activity is better than none.** You can start slowly and build up from there. If you have a health problem such as heart disease, high blood pressure, or diabetes, ask your healthcare professional about the types and amounts of physical activity that may work for you.
- **Aim for at least 150 minutes per week of moderate-intensity aerobic activity.** Walking fast, jogging, dancing, or other types of aerobic activities make your heart beat faster and may cause you to breathe harder. Try to be active for at least 10 minutes at a time without breaks.
- **Do strengthening activities twice per week.** Activities that make you push or pull against something may improve your strength and balance. Try resistance bands, lifting weights.
- **Build and maintain bone and muscle strength.** To help strengthen your whole body, work all major muscle groups, including those in your legs, back, abdomen, chest, shoulders, and arms. Doing 2 to 3 sets for each muscle group twice per week may help.
- **Work on your balance.** Pilates and Yoga may improve balance, muscle strength, and flexibility. You can also try tai chi if tolerated and able.
- **Track your progress.** Seeing your progress over time may help you keep at it. Monitor the type of activity you did, how long you did it and how you felt. You can use an electronic fitness tracker: smartphone, bracelets or watches or you can keep track of it using an activity log.
- **Stay hydrated.** Remember to drink liquids. Water is the best option. Avoid sports beverages with a lot of sugar, they will add extra calories and aren't necessary for most moderate activity.
- **You can try new activities to help with consistency.** Do low-impact aerobics or water aerobics if they are better tolerated. You can also walk on a treadmill or outdoors.
- **Increase physical activity slowly over time.** As you reach your goals, think about how you can up the intensity or time spent being active. To reduce injury risk, increase physical activity gradually. First, increase the number of minutes you engage in an activity per session or the number of times that you do an activity each day or each week. For example, if you are walking 3 days a week, add another day. Later, up the intensity by walking faster or jogging. Little by little, raise the number of times you do each strength-training activity. For instance, first work up to 2 sets of 10 to 15 repetitions with a 1-pound weight. When that is easy for you, consider trying the activity with a 2-pound weight. Make changes slowly. If you add weight, do fewer repetitions until you get used to the greater intensity.
- **Reward yourself.** Give yourself a nonfood reward for meeting your goals. Plan a day outside, pick a healthy recipe to try. Tell your friends and family and celebrate.

Have a happy and healthy month!

Arelis Torres, RD

301-493-9320

atorres@bethesdamed.com