

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

NUTRITION/FITNESS

A healthy body requires a combination of a well-balanced diet and regular exercise. Both are necessary to keep your body looking and feeling its best. Children need good nutrition and proper fitness to do their best in school while adults need these to stay healthy and perform effectively on the job and in the home. Even with busy schedules it is possible to provide nutritious foods and the opportunity for regular exercise.

Good nutrition comes from eating a variety of healthy foods, and these can be obtained simply by balancing the types of food you eat. A balanced diet should consist of some foods made from grains, a variety of fruits and vegetables, some milk and other dairy products, a variety of meats, poultry, fish, eggs or beans, and limited fats and sweets. Provide these foods beginning with the most important meal of the day - breakfast. Make the effort to include breakfast in the family schedule, even if there is not time for everyone to sit down to a "traditional" breakfast. A peanut butter sandwich, a piece of fruit, and a glass of milk fits the nutritional guidelines of a healthy breakfast.

Regular exercise is essential to a healthy body and a healthy heart, and a person's lifetime exercise habits begin in childhood. Set the example for your children by becoming active in a regular exercise program. After checking with your doctor, begin a routine of moderate exercise which can be maintained over a long period of time. Include children in the routine or help them become involved in regular sports or fitness activities.

It is never too late to change! Increase your families chances for a long and healthy life by watching what you eat and learning to exercise.

COMMUNICATING WITH CHILDREN

Communicating effectively with children is dependent upon learning to be a good listener. Although parents hear children talking every day and carry on conversations with them, good communication is not always taking place.

When your child talks, make an effort to really listen. Stop what ever you are doing, establish eye contact, and pay attention to what your child is saying. Quite often what is said between the lines is just as important as the words being spoken. Demonstrate an interest in what your child is saying by asking appropriate questions and responding in a positive manner. If a child's comments are continually passed off as being of little consequence the child will begin to feel that his/her opinions are not important.

Find ways to communicate to your child that you think he/she is important. Compliment achievements and efforts with no strings attached. Compliments can be good motivators and help show that you really notice your child

Always try to talk with your child, not to your child. Children realize when they are being talked down to and become defensive in their reactions.

Remember, open communication with your child is critical. Parents should be the most important listeners a child has. Show that you care by making your child feel important enough to be heard.

Our children are living messages we send to a time and place we will never see.