

Sisters Together: Move More, Eat Better



Energize Yourself

AND YOUR FAMILY!



National Institute of
Diabetes and Digestive
and Kidney Diseases

WIN Weight-control
Information Network

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Did you know?

Eating healthy foods and staying physically active can help you keep up with the demands of your busy life. Moving more and eating better may help you take better care of yourself and be there for the people who depend on you.

If you are overweight and inactive, you may be more likely to develop

- certain forms of cancer
- heart disease
- high blood pressure
- stroke
- type 2 diabetes (high blood sugar)

This brochure is part of a series of materials and a program designed to encourage black women to move more and eat better. You may use this brochure and others in the *Sisters Together Series* to help you and other black women become physically active and make healthy food choices.

Why move more and eat better?

You may improve your health if you move more and eat better, but that's not the only reason to be active and make healthy food choices. You can also

- charge up your body for work, play, and family
- feel better about yourself and manage stress better
- look better in your clothes
- set a good example for your children and your friends
- tone your body (without losing your curves)

Your family, friends, and coworkers can be great sources of support as you adopt healthier habits. Ask them to join you in healthy eating and physical activity. Being healthy is important

Should I talk to my health care provider before starting an exercise program?

Most people do not need to see their health care provider before getting physically active. If you have heart disease, high blood pressure, osteoporosis (weak bones), or obesity, talk to your health care provider before starting a vigorous physical activity program.

You do not need to talk to your provider before you start a less intense activity like walking. If you have been inactive for some time, plan to walk at least twice a week for a month. Once you meet this goal, add another day or make your walk longer.



for them, too! By making healthy choices together, you may find it is easier to move more and eat better.

How much physical activity do I need?

Regular physical activity can be fun and help you feel great. To improve your health, aim for at least 150 minutes per week (30 minutes a day on 5 days) of moderately intense aerobic activity. This type of aerobic activity, like brisk walking or dancing, speeds up your heart rate and breathing. To lose weight and keep it off, you may need more: Aim for 300 minutes per week (an hour a day for 5 days).

On at least 2 days per week, also try activities that strengthen your muscles. Examples include heavy gardening (digging and shoveling) and exercises that use hand weights.

For best results, spread out the physical activity throughout the week. Even 10 minutes at a time counts!

How can I handle barriers to becoming more physically active?

Adding more physical activity to your life may seem a challenge. Here are some common barriers and solutions.

“I don’t have time for physical activity.”

You can “sneak” it into your day a few minutes at a time. Get started by making these small changes in your daily routine:

- Add three 10-minute walks to your day, if you can do so safely near your work or home.
- Take regular breaks from sitting at the computer or watching TV. Get up, move, and stretch by lifting your hands up over your head. Twist side to side.
- Schedule your workouts as you would a hair or work appointment and stick to your plan.
- Start taking the stairs instead of the elevator whenever you have the option (be sure the stairs are well lit).
- If your job requires a lot of sitting, add a walk around the block to one of your daily breaks.



“I’m going to ruin my hairstyle.”

If you avoid physical activity because you do not want to ruin your hairstyle, try

- a natural hairstyle
- a short haircut
- a style that can be wrapped or pulled back
- braids, twists, or locs

“It’s too expensive.”

There are ways to be active that are free or lower in cost. You can

- check out programs that may be offered at your workplace or local place of worship, like dance classes or walking programs.
- find a local park or school track where you can walk or run.
- walk in a mall or a free museum.
- work out with videos or DVDs in your home. You can find these at bookstores, your local library, or online. Or try swapping with friends.

“Physical activity is a chore.”

It can be fun!

- Be active with your kids—hike, jump double Dutch, play flag football, play tag, toss a softball, or visit the zoo. Physical activity is good for them, too.
- Do things you enjoy, like biking, gardening, playing sports, or swimming.
- Get a friend to try out a dance class with you. Walk or take an exercise class with a friend or a group. This way, you can cheer each other on, have company, and feel safer when you are outdoors.



TIP

Daily activities can cause salt buildup 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, check out *Hair Care Tips for Sisters On The Move*. See the Resources section for a website link.

- Use your daily workouts as time-outs just for yourself.
- Enjoy friendly competition with family and friends by setting a weight-loss challenge.
- Give your workouts more meaning by setting goals to do a walk or run for a cause you support.

How can I create a healthier eating plan?



A healthy meal may include vegetables and fruits and small portions of protein and whole grains (breads, pastas, and rice). Here are some ideas on how to create a healthier eating plan for you and your family.

When planning meals for the week, think about including the following:

- a salad or other vegetables (eat “from the rainbow” of colors)
- fat-free or low-fat milk and milk products
- fruits (choose a variety of vibrant colors)
- lean beef or pork, chicken, seafood, eggs, tofu, or beans
- whole grains, like brown rice, oatmeal, whole-wheat bread, and whole-grain cornmeal

Treats are fine once in a while. Just don't make treat foods like candy, desserts, pizza, and potato chips an everyday choice. Limit sweet treats to special occasions, and keep portions small.

Remember that alcohol, juices, soda, and other sweet drinks contain a lot of sugar and are high in calories.

What if I can't handle lactose?

If you cannot digest lactose (the sugar found in milk), try lactose-free milk or yogurt. You can also get calcium from calcium-fortified cereal, juices, and drinks made from soy or nuts. Eating dark leafy vegetables like collard greens and kale and canned fish with soft bones like salmon can also help you meet your body's calcium needs.

How can reading the Nutrition Facts label help me?

Reviewing the Nutrition Facts label can help you choose foods that are high in fiber, vitamins, and minerals and low in these nutrients, which federal guidelines recommend Americans reduce:

- saturated fats and *trans* fats that are solid at room temperature—like butter, margarine, and lard—which are not heart healthy
- sodium (salt)—aim for fewer than 1,500 mg a day (about 2/3 teaspoon)
- sugar

How can I handle barriers to healthy eating?

Eating healthy foods may seem hard when you do not have time to cook or you are on a tight budget. Try these tips to get past barriers that keep you from eating well.

“I don’t have time to plan healthy meals.”

Eating well doesn’t have to take a lot of time. Here are some ways that you and your family can eat better:

- Fuel up every day with breakfast. Try a whole-grain cereal like bran flakes with fat-free or low-fat milk or yogurt. Enjoy some fruit with your breakfast, too, like bananas, berries, or peaches.

What is the Nutrition Facts label?

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration Nutrition Facts label appears on most packaged foods. It tells you how many calories and servings are in a box or can. The label also shows how many nutrients like fat, fiber, sodium, and sugar are in one serving of food. You can use these facts

- to track your calorie intake and number of servings
- to make healthy food choices by selecting items lower in salt, fats, and sugar, and higher in fiber and vitamins

For more guidance on reading food labels, check out the webpage *How to Understand and Use the Nutrition Facts Label* listed under Resources.



- Invite your kids to join you on the weekend to plan, shop for, and cook a healthy family meal. Make it a game! Children may be more likely to eat dishes that they help prepare.
- When grocery shopping, choose whole grains like whole-wheat bread and brown rice. These are higher in fiber, protein, and nutrients than refined white grains. They also keep you full longer.

“Eating well is too expensive.”

You don't have to spend a lot of money to eat well:

- Avoid buying single portions (like pudding, snacks, or yogurt). Instead, buy in bulk and divide into smaller portions as needed.
- Check newspaper ads for grocery specials. Clip coupons or print them from websites.
- Buy fruits and vegetables that are in season (they are cheaper at that time).
- Try canned beans like black, butter, kidney, or pinto beans. They are loaded with protein, cost less than meat, and make quick and easy additions to your meals.

How can I eat well when away from home?

Here are some ways to make healthy choices when you are on the go:

- Avoid heavy gravies, salad dressings, or sauces. Leave them off or ask for them on the side so you can control how much you eat.
- Order a grilled chicken salad or sandwich with whole-grain bread.
- Share a meal with a friend or take half of it home.
- Take healthy snacks with you to work, like apples or fat-free yogurt with fruit.

I can do it!

Set goals and move at your own pace to reach them. Ask your family, friends, and coworkers to help you. They can join you, encourage you, help you with setbacks, and be there to celebrate your successes!

No matter what, keep trying. You can do it!



TIP

Solid fats like butter, margarine, and shortening can have high levels of saturated or *trans* fats, which are not heart healthy. Instead of solid fats, choose liquid fats or soft margarines. Sources of liquid fats include plant-based oils like corn, cottonseed, safflower, soybean, and sunflower.

Resources

Additional Reading from the Weight-control Information Network

The following publications are available online at <http://www.win.niddk.nih.gov/publications> and also by calling WIN toll-free at 1-877-946-4627:

Celebrate the Beauty of Youth shares ideas for busy young women on how to stay active, healthy, and strong (available online at <http://www.win.niddk.nih.gov/publications/celebrate.htm>).

Just Enough for You: About Food Portions explains the difference between a portion and a serving, and offers tips to help readers choose healthy portions (available online at http://www.win.niddk.nih.gov/publications/just_enough.htm).

Walking...A Step in the Right Direction explains how to start a walking program, presents a sample program, and shows stretches for warming up and cooling down (available online at <http://www.win.niddk.nih.gov/publications/walking.htm>).

Additional Resources

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

Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2010. HHS and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). These federal guidelines on healthy eating provide detailed information on how to improve your eating habits and on how to make healthy vegetarian choices. Available online at <http://www.health.gov/DietaryGuidelines>.

Eat Right When Money's Tight. USDA. This publication offers tips on stretching resources, smart shopping, and best buys for cost and nutrition, as well as information on the USDA's nutrition assistance programs. Visit <http://www.nal.usda.gov/snap/EatRightWhenMoneysTight.pdf>.

Fooducate. People with smartphones can use this free app to scan barcodes at the grocery store for information about how healthy a food item is. Get the app at <https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/fooducate/id398436747?mt=8>.

Hair Care Tips for Sisters On The Move. A brochure with tips for African American women about ways to style and care for hair while being physically active. Available online at <http://cdn1.sph.harvard.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/135/2012/09/sisters.pdf>.

How to Understand and Use the Nutrition Facts Label. This overview on the U.S. Food and Drug Administration's website guides you in using the label to select healthy food for yourself and your family. Visit <http://www.fda.gov/Food/IngredientsPackagingLabeling/LabelingNutrition/ucm274593.htm>.

MyPlate. USDA Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion. This website offers many interactive resources, including tools that give you suggestions on eating and physical activity based on your lifestyle. A menu planner can help you make healthier meals in line with federal dietary guidelines. Visit <http://www.choosemyplate.gov>. For special help with eating on a budget, see <http://www.choosemyplate.gov/healthy-eating-on-budget.html>.

TIP

Need some new ideas for planning menus, shopping, and cooking on a budget? Check out healthy eating information, menus, recipes, and tips offered in the following places:

- *Eat Right When Money's Tight*
- Fooducate
- MyPlate ("Healthy Eating on a Budget" section of the website)

National Diabetes Education Program (NDEP). This program's materials provide facts about diabetes and obesity prevention and control. NDEP's publications catalog also offers resources specifically for African Americans. Available by phone at 1-888-693-6337 or online at <http://www.yourdiabetesinfo.org>.

National Kidney Disease Education Program. This program's publications can help you detect and manage kidney disease and learn about the impact of kidney disease on African Americans. Available online at <http://nkdep.nih.gov/resources.shtml>.

Nutrition Website. This USDA website provides information and resources on food and healthy eating. Visit <http://www.nutrition.gov>.

Inclusion of resources is for information only and does not imply endorsement by NIDDK or WIN.

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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>.

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 fact sheet was also reviewed by Anne E. Sumner, M.D., F.A.H.A., Chief, Section on Ethnicity and Health, NIH; Natalie L. M. Ramsey, Study Coordinator, Diabetes, Endocrinology, and Obesity Branch (DEOB), NIDDK, NIH; and Michelle Y. O'Connor, Postbaccalaureate Intramural Research Training Awards Study Coordinator, DEOB, NIDDK, NIH.

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)