

Creating A Healthy Home Environment

To be successful in keeping youth active and healthy, YMCAs have found it is critical to involve the entire family. It is much easier for children to keep active and make smart, health-related choices if they see their parents doing the same. Make health, activity and exercise priorities in your family. The benefits of this approach include strengthening family ties, developing and experiencing similar interests, preventing chronic diseases and—most important—simply having fun as a family unit.

CONSIDER THESE TIPS:

- Commit to 30 minutes of family physical activity each day. Agree on a time that works best for all involved—early morning, before dinner or just after dinner.
- Commit to eating healthy (low sugar, low fat) meals at least five out of seven days each week.
- Set family norms to reduce the stress level and disputes among siblings in your household by agreeing to: respect one another's property and feelings; take responsibility for your own actions; be honest and trustworthy; and behave in a caring, thoughtful and considerate manner.
- Using ideas shared on this tip sheet, set goals together as a family related to health and activity.
- Enjoy simple rewards when the family achieves its goals (family night at the YMCA, family movie night, purchase of a new family game, etc.).

THE U.S. CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION OFFERS THESE ADDITIONAL TIPS FOR FAMILY FITNESS:

- Put a two-hour limit on children's sedentary activities such as television, video games and computer time. Parents should also limit their own time in front of the television to set a good example for children.
- While watching television, parents and children should occasionally try some exercise such as doing sit-ups, push-ups or running in place.
- Help your children plan group activities such as skating or hiking with their friends.
- On rainy or bitterly cold days, encourage your children to play active indoor games that involve physical activity such as "Simon Says."
- Be your child's "exercise buddy." Set goals together for increasing physical activity and plan daily walks or bike rides.



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