

# memo

**DATE:** May 5, 2021  
**TO:** WIC Coordinators and LA Staff  
**FROM:** Carole Kelnhofer, Training Coordinator  
**SUBJECT:** Get Moving and Stay Active: Topic of the Month

There is no one size fits all when it comes to physical activity. Finding what works for each individual and sticking to it is what matters most. The [Move Your Way Campaign](#) was created by the [Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion](#) (ODPHP) to enhance the recommendations provided in the [Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans](#). The campaign is designed to offer resources to help people live healthier lives, encouraging them to get moving and stay active!

According to the [Physical Activity Guideline for Americans](#), **women should get at least 150 minutes (2.5 hours) of moderate-intensity aerobic activity along with 2 days of muscle-strengthening activity each week.**

Examples include:

- Moderate-Intensity Aerobic Activity – a moderate walk or a casual bike ride
- Muscle-Strengthening Activity – lifting weights, working with resistance bands, or climbing stairs.

When discussing time, encourage starting slow and focus on the benefits of getting any amount of physical activity. The 150 minutes may be spread throughout the week in various intervals; some examples include 30 minutes each for 5 days or 20 minutes each for 3 days and 45 minutes on 2 days. When time is a factor, some may choose to do 10 minutes at a time, multiple times a day to fit exercise in as able.

## **Focus on the Benefits of Physical Activity**

- Improve mood, focus, and sleep.
- Boost energy levels.
- Increase muscle building and balance.
- Help with weight maintenance.
- Reduce labor and recovery complications.
- Lower the risk of gestational diabetes, preeclampsia, and postpartum depression.

The [Move Your Way Campaign](#) includes [Materials for During and After Pregnancy](#) with fact sheets, videos, interactive tools, and posters that may be shared with participants.

### **Physical Activity in Pregnancy**

The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) shared answers to some frequently asked questions in [Exercise During Pregnancy](#). ACOG reports that during a “normal and healthy” pregnancy it is safe to continue or start regular physical activity. However, it is best to consult with one’s health care provider to monitor the progress of pregnancy and decide whether and how much physical activity is considered safe.

#### **Safe Pregnancy Activity**

- **Walking:** Brisk (moderate-intense) walking is easy on the body.
- **Swimming:** Water activity supports your weight to avoid injury and muscle strain.
- **Biking:** Casual biking with a helmet on paved bike paths or sidewalks.
- **Yoga or Pilates:** Yoga reduces stress and improves flexibility. *Avoid hot yoga and high intensity Pilates during pregnancy.*
- **Light House Cleaning:** Includes time spent to dust, vacuum, sweep, or organize.

Individuals that are experienced runners, body builders, or cross-fitters should consult with their medical provider on safety during each individual pregnancy. It is important to keep in mind that any activity that causes discomfort should be discontinued.

### **Physical Activity for Postpartum**

ACOG also found exercising can help improve mood, support weight maintenance and muscle strengthening, and promote sleep in the postpartum period. The recommendation includes a gradual return to former activity following the typical 6–8-week healing period after labor and delivery. If delivery included a surgery or complications, encourage the participant to consult with their healthcare provider before beginning to exercise.

#### **Safe Postpartum Activity**

- **Walking:** Slowly pick up the pace and lengthen the intervals.
- **Jogging or Running:** Start slow and increase time and speed as comfortable.
- **Swimming:** Water sports continue to support the body; ramp it up with swimming laps.
- **Biking:** Continue biking with a helmet; try taking it off road on one of the many local bike paths.
- **Heavy House Cleaning:** Moving to clean behind furniture, washing floors/walls, or trash removal.

Remind participants to start slow and stop or scale back if they are experiencing pain. The idea is to aid the body in healing, not to cause injury. Physical activity does not need to be strenuous to achieve benefits!

## **WIC's Role in Promoting Physical Activity**

At WIC we have the benefit of spending some quality time with our participants during key periods of their life. The nutrition education visits provide an opportunity to engage participants in discussion about their interest in physical activity. Below are a few things to cover with participants.

- Ask questions about physical activity during pregnancy and at the postpartum visit.
- Identify barriers to getting or staying active.
- Provide education, tips, and resources to support the participant's goals.

The ODPHP created a [Move Your Way: Health Care Providers Fact Sheet](#) for Maternal Health Care Providers that offers tips for speaking with pregnant and postpartum participants about physical activity.

### **Conversation Starters**

By asking open-ended questions, we give the participant space to share how they are staying active and what (if anything) prevents them from meeting their goals. Here are a few examples:

- "Tell me about the different ways that you stay active."
- "Tell me about the types of activity you enjoy."
- "What has your doctor told you about physical activity?"
- "What has your doctor told you about (beginning or resuming) physical activity?"
- "What makes it difficult for you to be active?"

### **Family Time**

Staying active as a family is a great way to model healthy habits, spend time together, and build close relationships. Family time is essential to help ensure a healthy mental and physical development for children. If parents are able to engage their children in physical activity at a young age, they may be hooked for life.

Encourage the participant to incorporate the whole family into their activity by taking a walk or bike ride, going to the park or zoo, doing a scavenger hunt, or simply cleaning the house together. Check out this article from the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) on [11 Ways to Encourage Your Child to Be Physically Active](#) for some tips to offer parents.

### **Resources**

Once you have completed the full nutrition assessment, you will have a better idea of what the individual participant may need. Offering referrals and resources is a great way to support participants in meeting their goals. One resource, from the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), is [Active People, Healthy Nation](#). The initiative was created to help more Americans become physically active by 2027. Individuals and Families can join the initiative to explore benefits, access tips and resources, connect to the Active People network, and receive a monthly newsletter. For more information, visit [Individual Influencers](#) on the CDC website.

[Explore Minnesota](#) is a resource for finding things to do and places to go around our beautiful state. The [Kid-Friendly Outdoor Activities in Minnesota](#) article offers tips to engage the whole family in various activities. Some activities, such as the [Minnesota Children's Museum](#) and [Minnesota Historical Society](#) offer discounted admission, and others such as the [Minnesota Zoo](#) offer free admission for WIC participants. Call or check out their websites for more information.

Another idea is to learn about your community resources; look for local activities that may be free or reduced-price. Examples include local parks or bike paths, community centers or the YMCA (many offer discounts on various classes or open gym/swim days), disc golf course, a trip to the zoo, [Geocaching](#) around the neighborhood, or connecting with various local exercise groups.

Remember to always ask permission before sharing a referral or resource and be sure to document what was provided so that you may follow up at the next visit.

*Continue to share topic ideas with Carole Kelnhofer at [carole.kelnhofer@state.mn.us](mailto:carole.kelnhofer@state.mn.us).*

### **Reference - Complete Listing of Hyperlinks**

[Move your Way Campaign](https://health.gov/our-work/physical-activity/move-your-way-campaign) (<https://health.gov/our-work/physical-activity/move-your-way-campaign>)

[Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion](https://health.gov/) (<https://health.gov/>)

[Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans](https://health.gov/sites/default/files/2019-09/Physical_Activity_Guidelines_2nd_edition.pdf) ([https://health.gov/sites/default/files/2019-09/Physical\\_Activity\\_Guidelines\\_2nd\\_edition.pdf](https://health.gov/sites/default/files/2019-09/Physical_Activity_Guidelines_2nd_edition.pdf))

[Materials for During and After Pregnancy](https://health.gov/our-work/physical-activity/move-your-way-campaign/campaign-materials/materials-during-and-after-pregnancy) (<https://health.gov/our-work/physical-activity/move-your-way-campaign/campaign-materials/materials-during-and-after-pregnancy>)

[Exercise During Pregnancy](https://www.acog.org/womens-health/faqs/exercise-during-pregnancy) (<https://www.acog.org/womens-health/faqs/exercise-during-pregnancy>)

[Move Your Way: Health Care Providers Fact Sheet](https://health.gov/sites/default/files/2020-12/MYW_MH_HCP_FS_0.pdf) ([https://health.gov/sites/default/files/2020-12/MYW\\_MH\\_HCP\\_FS\\_0.pdf](https://health.gov/sites/default/files/2020-12/MYW_MH_HCP_FS_0.pdf))

[11 Ways to Encourage Your Child to Be Physically Active](https://www.healthychildren.org/English/healthy-living/fitness/Pages/Encouraging-Your-Child-to-be-Physically-Active.aspx) (<https://www.healthychildren.org/English/healthy-living/fitness/Pages/Encouraging-Your-Child-to-be-Physically-Active.aspx>)

[Active People, Healthy Nation](https://www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity/activepeoplehealthynation/index.html) (<https://www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity/activepeoplehealthynation/index.html>)

[Individual Influencers](https://www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity/activepeoplehealthynation/join-active-people-healthy-nation/individuals.html) (<https://www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity/activepeoplehealthynation/join-active-people-healthy-nation/individuals.html>)

[Explore Minnesota](https://www.exploreminnesota.com/) (<https://www.exploreminnesota.com/>)

[Kid-Friendly Outdoor Activities in Minnesota](https://www.exploreminnesota.com/article/kid-friendly-outdoor-activities-minnesota) (<https://www.exploreminnesota.com/article/kid-friendly-outdoor-activities-minnesota>)

[Minnesota Children's Museum](https://mcm.org/join/all-play-membership/) (<https://mcm.org/join/all-play-membership/>)

[Minnesota Historical Society](https://www.mnhs.org/limitedincomeprogram) (<https://www.mnhs.org/limitedincomeprogram>)

[Minnesota Zoo \(https://mnzoo.org/us/freetoexplore/\)](https://mnzoo.org/us/freetoexplore/)

[Geocaching \(https://www.geocaching.com/guide/\)](https://www.geocaching.com/guide/)

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651-201-4444, [wic.health@state.mn.us](mailto:wic.health@state.mn.us), [www.health.state.mn.us](http://www.health.state.mn.us); To obtain this information in a different  
format, call: 651-201-4444*