

Don't Hibernate...Stay Active this Winter

January 2010

Don't let winter's cold and darkness slow you down! While weather and the shorter days makes it harder to stay active, human beings were not built to hibernate! We need to move in every season...not just when its warm and the sun is shining.

The Centers for Disease Control recommends children engage in moderate-intensity activities for 60 minutes daily and adults for a minimum of 30, preferably 60 minutes/day. What is a moderate-intensity activity? An activity that burns 3 1/2—7 calories/minute. Generally you can talk while doing the activity but not sing! Think...shoveling light snow, walking 3 miles/hr, snowshoeing, mopping the floor, carrying firewood or yoga.

Need some ideas to motivate yourself and your kids to stay active??

If you prefer outside activities try:

- **Cross Country skiing**—provides a full body workout with fewer risks than downhill skiing. Try it out by renting equipment through 3 Rivers Outdoors in downtown La Crosse or the Outdoor Connection at UW-La Crosse.
- **Snow shoeing**—like walking only on top of the snow! Try snowshoeing in the marsh, Hixon forest, Goose Island or Perot Park and enjoy the sights & sounds of nature.
- **Sledding**— Go as a family and try hills at Myrick Park, Copeland Park or Forest Hills in La Crosse, Deer Wood Park in Holmen or Van Riper Park in Onalaska
- **Ice Skating**—Strap on your skates & visit Deer Wood Park, a lighted, outdoor rink in Holmen, Hood Park, Copeland Park or Green Island Ice Arena in La Crosse or the Onalaska Omni Center.

Prefer indoor activities during the winter?

- **Park & Rec**—Check out La Crosse, Onalaska, Holmen or West Salem's Park & Rec offerings! Park & Rec pro-grams have something for everyone. Children can sign up for activities such as soccer, basketball, wrestling or hockey. Adult offerings range from Pilates and kickboxing classes to zumba and volleyball. To view area park and rec offerings go to:
 - 📍 City of La Crosse at www.cityoflacrosse.org
 - 📍 City of Onalaska at www.Cityofonalaska.com
 - 📍 Village of West Salem at <http://www.westsalemwi.com/parkandrec.htm>
 - 📍 Village of Holmen at <http://www.holmenwi.com/holmenpr/>
- **Swim**—Love to swim? Check out the YMCA in La Crosse or the YMCA North in Onalaska and the Best Western Midway Hotel & Riverfront Resort in La Crosse. Call the Midway before going as access to their pool depending on guests at the hotel.
- **Dance**—Grab your kids, crank up the tunes, and dance. Dancing is a great way to increase your heart rate and burn calories and its fun! Kids don't spend as much time outside during the winter because of limited daylight and weather, so they tend to have a bit more energy to burn off. So, use the radio or create your own music to get your juices flowing.
- **Take a class**—Try something different...yoga...zumba...pilates or Tai-Chi

- **Exercise at home**-Buy an exercise DVD, borrow one from the library or download routines from the web. This can be a fun way to stay in shape at home.
- **Try resistance exercises**- Get some hand weights or stretch bands to use at home for resistance exercise. You can get fit while you watch your favorite TV show or listen to music.

So help yourself and your family stay in shape this winter. Be creative, try something new and make it fun!

5 Ways for Parents & Kids to Get Heart Healthy Together

February 2010

February is heart health month. While heart problems are rare in children, lifelong heart health begins in childhood. Consider the following...

- Children today are less fit than a generation ago. Why? Overweight, inactivity, high cholesterol and cigarette smoking are more common among today's children.
- If health trends remain constant, 35 million of today's 83 million children will develop & eventually die from heart & blood vessel disease.
- Every day, 2,000 young people in the U.S. become smokers.

What can parents do to help their kids develop a heart healthy lifestyle? Try these 5 tips for raising heart healthy children:

1. **Help your child to activate their lifestyle.** Take advantage of the many opportunities our community has to offer...Park & Rec opportunities, the YMCA, Boys and Girls Clubs, area parks, trails & skating rinks. When your kids are bored, encourage activities that get them moving like playing Frisbee or building a snowman in the yard. Most of all be a good role model. When you set a good example and get in your 60 minutes of activity each day your kids notice!
2. **Limit screen time.** TV, movies, DVDs and computer games keep you sedentary. Limit screen time to 2 hours or less each day. Plan active family outings and vacations. Rent skis or snow shoes and explore Goose Island trails or the marsh. When the snow melts bike or hike area trails.
3. **Develop the activity habit.** What do you and your kids enjoy doing? Some folks thrive on team sports while others prefer individual activities. Explore your options through classes or lessons to find something you and your kids can enjoy over your lifetimes. Walk or bike rather than drive to visit friends who live nearby, take the stairs rather than the elevator and if you must drive, park at the farthest point in the parking lot to get in a short walk to your destination.
4. **Give your child the best start...breastfeed.** Research shows us that children who are breastfed are less likely to have risk factors for heart disease in adulthood than their formula fed counterparts. Children who've been breastfed have a lower body mass index and a higher amount of HDLs (the "good" cholesterol) in their blood.

5. **Help your child develop a preference for a healthy diet.** Children learn their eating habits in childhood. How we stock our cupboards and refrigerator determine our children's eating habits. According to the American Heart Association a healthy diet would include plenty of fruits and veggies each day, fish twice each week, 3 servings of whole grains daily, be light on the salt and include no more than 36 ounces of sugar sweetened beverages weekly.

Give your children the best start by helping them develop healthy habits.

Celebrate Mother's Day! Be Active with Your Kids

May 2010

Mothers everywhere want to be good role models for their children. Unfortunately, motherhood often means women juggle many responsibilities and something ends up going. Often it's the time they used to set aside for exercise. A study conducted by Kathryn Schmitz, a University of Minnesota epidemiologist, found that women's exercise levels drop by 20% when they have children. Mothers out there juggling the demands of kids, work, husband and parents probably didn't need a study to tell them this!

So how can busy mothers stay physically active? Schmitz suggests working out with your kids and trying...

- **Kangaroo Walks.** Use a baby carrier for baby and take her along on your walk.
- **Workout videos.** Choose a child's workout or dance video and join your child in exercising to the video.
- **Stroller striding.** Put on your walking shoes, put your child in a stroller and go for a walk. For a more vigorous workout, tie on your running shoes and run behind a jogging stroller.
- **Track Time.** Take your kids to your local school track. Have them bring their bike or skates so they can keep up with you as you walk the track!
- **Playground "Health" Club.** Rather than watching your child enjoy the swings or slide at the local playground or park, join them on the swings, slide or monkey bars.
- **Get Classy.** Sign up for mom and tot exercise class through the local Y, health club or recreation program.
- **Musical moves.** Find music both you and your child enjoy and move to it. Dance, toss a ball or march to the beat.

The Coulee Region Childhood Obesity Coalition encourages mothers throughout the Coulee Region to be active everyday. Remember...your children are watching and what you do...they do!

Healthy Dads = Healthy Kids

June 2010

Father's Day is a time to thank fathers everywhere for all they do for their families and communities. What better way to do that than to give them the gift of health this Father's Day! Coulee Region Childhood Obesity Coalition members would like to share with you 10 ways you can keep your father healthy on his special day...

1. *Serve dad a healthy breakfast in bed.* Try waffles or pancakes topped with fresh sliced strawberries or a fresh fruit smoothie coupled with peanut butter whole wheat toast.
2. *Take a bike ride.* Enjoy a ride on one of the many area trails or just around the neighborhood!
3. *Go fly a kite!* Warm summer breezes can be perfect for kite flying. Pick an area park with lots of open space so your kite has room to soar.
4. *Take a hike.* Walk one of the area trails, hike one of the trails at Goose Island or Hixon Forest or just stroll around the neighborhood.
5. *Play badminton!* Dust off that old badminton game & set it up in the back yard. Play singles or doubles as space allows!
6. *Visit the zoo.* Plan a visit to Myrick Park zoo. Check out the animals and take the time to enjoy Kids Coulee.
7. *Walk to the library.* Have Dad come with you to check out some books that you can read together.
8. *Plant flowers or a vegetable garden.* Spade up a small area in your yard to plant flowers or a few vegetable plants. No space? Try container gardening—buy a few large pots and plant your flowers or veggies in those. Check out area farmer’s markets for unique plants!
9. *Go bowling!* Check out the bowling alleys in La Crosse, Onalaska, West Salem, Sparta or Bangor. Reserve a lane and challenge dad to a Father’s Day “tournament”.
10. *Enjoy the water!* Check out one of the area pools or aquatic centers, go canoeing or tubing!



5 Tips for a Happy, Healthy Summer

July 2010

The signs of summer are all around us, pleasant weather, blooming flowers, and kids are on vacation from school. Summertime can offer lots of opportunities for fun and learning but it can also be a stressful time for parents trying to juggle work schedules, child care, and play activities.

Here are some tips for a healthy and happy summer!

1. **Make a plan!** Kids need some structure to help organize their time and prepare them for the day’s activities. Take out a monthly calendar and involve your kids in the selection of activities. Look for a variety to keep it fun and enjoyable. Here in La Crosse we are very fortunate to have excellent opportunities within our parks and recreation departments, the library, and the great outdoors.
2. **Keep moving!** The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) recommends children and adolescents get 60 minutes of physical activity each day. To add some aerobic exercise to your day, plan a bike ride, take a hike on a trail, go for a brisk walk around the neighborhood, or a swim at the community pool.

3. **Limit screen time.** Set a house rule that limits screen time (TV, computer, hand-held video games) to 2 hours a day and enforce it! Use a timer and a log-in sheet so kids are empowered to keep track of their usage.

4. **Keep food choices healthy and simple.** Summer time offers a wonderful harvest of locally grown produce. Take your kids to the local farmers market and stock up on favorite fruits and vegetables. Have your kids create 'on the go snacks' by having them measure out serving size portions of their favorite healthy crackers and/or cookies into small storage bags that can be easily grabbed before heading out to the park.

5. **Invite others to join the fun!** Sharing summer activities with a friend can make exercising even more fun. Get together with other parents and create an exchange of special talents. One parent may offer to lead a weekly yoga class, another may offer a fun activity in the garden, and another may offer to organize a neighborhood game of hide and seek.

Summertime can be full of fun surprises. Be sure to enjoy it in a healthy and safe way!

