

Children's Health



Fun Ways To Keep Your Family Fit

(NAPSA)—Today, childhood obesity tops the charts as one of the primary health concerns for parents. In fact, one in five American kids and teens is overweight or obese and, as a result, are at risk for serious health issues such as high blood pressure, asthma, type 2 diabetes, and sleep and hormonal disorders that would typically appear in adulthood.

Dr. Shelley Armstrong, faculty member in the School of Health Sciences at Walden University and a certified health and physical educator, says, "Obesity is a very serious health and well-being issue and we can eliminate many of our kids' physical, social, emotional and even academic challenges by keeping our kids fit. When parents put a value on health and physical activity, kids are more likely to emulate that."

Know Your Numbers

It's important to become knowledgeable about the baseline numbers for each of your family members, such as body weight, body mass index, blood pressure and cholesterol levels. Ask your doctor to write these numbers down. Knowing these numbers will help you set goals for your family and work toward them.

How To Get Started

Fortunately, there are many ways parents can build fun physical activity into their family's routines, says Dr. Armstrong. Here are some tips:

- Schedule family walks or bike rides several times a week.
- Create family-friendly fitness



Parents encourage healthy lifestyle behaviors by making physical activity an enjoyable part of family life.

competitions like family boot camps, exercise scavenger hunts, pickup basketball in the driveway, or touch football.

- Be young again. Get your young children outside for a game of tag or to climb trees to get their heart rates moving.

- Go for a run. Running is one of the most convenient and inexpensive options for exercise and also one of the best forms for weight loss.

Dr. Armstrong also recommends setting exercise goals that follow the SMART method: specific, measurable, attainable, relevant and time-oriented. For example, set a goal that by the end of three months your family will work up to walking briskly for a half hour after dinner three nights a week.

For more ideas on how to build fun physical activities into your family's routines, visit www.WaldenU.edu/getthealthy.