National Physical Fitness & Sports Month

With summer just around the corner, many fun and new adventures beckon at the beaches, mountains, forests, and the pool. With so much to do, summer time offers a great opportunity to show our children how important regular physical activity can be in maintaining a healthy lifestyle.

Get Physical
Between the internet, video games, television, and cell phones and other hand-held devices, today’s kids are evolving into America’s most sedentary, and obese, sub-population. Developing a love of sports and a habit of regular physical activity as a child can be the foundation for a long and healthy life.

Get Motivated
The key to motivating children is to make physical activity fun. Children tend to pick fitness activities that they enjoy. Take small steps. Encourage your children to swim, bike, or play ball with friends and schoolmates.

Think about planning a 10-minute activity break (like recess at school) while your kids are watching TV or playing video games. Encourage them to participate in school-organized sports and phys ed classes and activities.

Get Moving
Children should be active for at least 60 minutes a day. Running, skating, bike riding and climbing are just a few of the ways to get children moving. Cutting down on solitary and sedentary activities like video games for prolonged periods, allows children the opportunity to get involved with more physical activities leading to a healthy, physically fit lifestyle.

Get Involved
Be a role model! Get the entire family involved with games, active play, and good nutrition. Getting involved in your children’s fitness routine will show your support and help foster a better relationship regarding physical fitness. In addition, by participating in physical activities together, you can increase the amount of quality time you spend with your children.

Get Results
Regular physical activity in childhood and adolescence can:
- Improve strength and endurance
- Help build healthy bones and muscles
- Help control weight
- Reduce anxiety and stress
- Increase self-esteem
- Improve blood pressure levels
- Improve cholesterol levels

In addition, positive and fun experience with sports and physical activities starting at a young age lays the foundation for being regularly active throughout life. Below are some recommended physical activities for kids:

2 – 3 times a week:
- Swinging
- Tumbling
- Push-ups or pull-ups
- Dancing
- Martial Arts

3 – 5 times a week:
- Biking
- Skateboarding
- Rope Climbing
- Volleyball
- Kickball
- Basketball
- Soccer
- Skiing
- Swimming
- Running

Tips for a More Active Family:
- Make a new house rule: no sitting still during television commercials
- Walk around the block after a meal
- Limit TV time and keep the TV out of a child’s bedroom
- Encourage schools to hold recess prior to lunch to increase physical activity before mealtime
- Volunteer to help with afterschool physical activity programs or sports teams

For more information, visit:
www.fitness.gov
www.letsmove.gov

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Osteoporosis: Myths vs. Facts

Osteoporosis is a disease of the human skeleton. It is best described as deterioration in bone mass which leads to the bones becoming fragile and, in turn, leads to an increased risk in fractures. If you are like most Americans, you have heard a lot of “facts” about osteoporosis. Beware, some of what you have heard may not be true! Read on for some of the common myths about this disease, and to learn some important information that may help you or a loved one.

Myth: Only older women get it
Both women and men can develop osteoporosis at any age. 20% of individuals with osteoporosis are men. In fact, men over 50 years of age are more likely to suffer an osteoporosis-related fracture than develop prostate cancer. An estimated 80,000 men experience a hip fracture each year, and men are almost 2 times as likely as same-aged women to die within the first year of breaking a hip.

Myth: Osteoporosis is inevitable
Osteoporosis is mostly preventable, with prevention occurring throughout an individual’s life. There are several things that can be done to improve bone health and prevent osteoporosis, including:

- Eating a balanced diet, rich in both calcium and vitamin D
- Engaging in weight-bearing exercise
- Refraining from smoking
- Limiting alcohol consumption
- Getting a periodic density screening test

Myth: Only Caucasian women get osteoporosis
In women over 50, 20% of non-Hispanic, white and Asian women, 5% of non-Hispanic African-American women and 10% of Hispanic women are estimated to have osteoporosis.

Myth: Osteoporosis isn’t serious
Osteoporosis causes devastating and painful consequences. Hip fractures are serious business; about 20% of individuals who suffer a hip fracture will die in the year after the fracture. This is usually due to complications related to the fracture or to the surgery to repair it such as pneumonia or blood clots in the lung. Additionally, more than 25% of people who survive a hip fracture will require long-term nursing home care.

Myth: Osteoporosis isn’t expensive
Each hip fracture costs in excess of $40,000 in total medical costs. By 2030, the cost of osteoporosis is expected to be more than $60 billion.

Myth: Osteoporosis is a rare condition
In fact, osteoporosis and low bone mass affect 55% of individuals aged 50 and older, or 52 million American men and women.

Myth: I would know if I had it
Osteoporosis is often called “the silent disease” because it progresses slowly over time, with no symptoms, until a bone fracture occurs. Bone mineral density tests can measure the amount of bone in different parts of the skeleton and can predict the risk of future fractures.

Myth: Once I have it, there’s nothing I can do about it
It’s never too late to take steps to protecting your bone health. Consume the recommended amounts of calcium and vitamin D; start regular weight-bearing exercises, and quit smoking today to help slow bone loss. In addition, many treatment options are available to slow bone loss and build new bone. Talk to your doctor or health professional about treatment options that may be right for you.

Risk Factors:
- Current low bone mass
- Being female
- Having a small frame or being thin
- Older age
- A family history of osteoporosis
- Estrogen deficiency
- Abnormal absence of menstrual periods (amenorrhea)
- Anorexia nervosa
- Not getting enough calcium
- Vitamin D deficiency
- Low testosterone levels in men
- A sedentary lifestyle
- Current cigarette smoking
- Excessive use of alcohol

For more information, visit: www.nof.org

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