

## Physical Activity and Nutrition

Seeking information about physical fitness and nutrition is the first step towards living healthier. Regular exercise and healthy food choices are important to managing your heart health, stress and depression, increasing energy, preventing disease, and improving heart disease risk factors.

### Get the Most Out of Your Exercise

Your weekly exercise program should include two main forms of activity:

- **Cardio:** This type of activity increases your heart rate, uses the large muscles of your body and burns the most calories. Examples include: Jogging, cycling, swimming, dancing
- **Moderate:** Moderate exercise is commonly determined by measuring the amount of oxygen taken in by the body during physical activity. You should increase your heart rate and breathing during these exercises but not as intensely as in cardio. This type of exercise will usually start with small amounts of activity and build up to 30–40 minutes of continuous activity. Examples include: Walking, low intensity yoga

A healthy level of physical activity for adults ages 18 to 65 years old should be at least 30 minutes of moderate exercise five days a week. However, if you have been inactive for several years, suffer from a chronic or physical condition, and are 65 years or older, you should consult with your physician for medical clearance before beginning any form of exercise. Your doctor may recommend or limit certain exercises based upon your health.

### Obesity

Obesity is a major concern for all Americans, and particularly African Americans. Those that are obese have a much higher risk of developing heart disease, even if they do not have other risk factors.

### Tips for a Healthy Diet

Healthy eating and exercise can help reduce your risk of major health problems. Besides improving health, a nutritious diet can also enrich your quality of life.

Making healthy choices does not mean you have to change the food you love. You can change the way you prepare your meals in various ways to help reduce your risk for heart disease and stroke.

- *Keep portions moderate.*
- *Drink more water.*
- *Limit your use of salt: Use vinegar, lemon juice, hot red pepper flakes, garlic, sea salt and onions instead of salt.*
- *Limit use of sugar.*
- *Use canola, olive, corn or safflower oil in cooking.*
- *Buy fresh lean cuts of meat and trim the fat before cooking.*
- *Eat plenty of fruits and vegetables.*

