K-STATE
Research and Extension

Walk Kansas

Celebrate healthy living newsletter

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More Health Benefits from Exercise

Walk Kansas is based on the second edition of the *Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans*, released in 2018. The latest scientific evidence shows that regular physical activity has many health benefits — even more than researchers knew about when the first set of guidelines were established in 2008. Here are some of the key findings.

In 2008, we knew that physical activity could help prevent breast and colon cancer. We now know that it helps prevent cancer of the bladder, endometrium, esophagus, kidney, stomach, and lung as well. In addition, meeting the recommendations for physical activity reduces the risk of dementia (including Alzheimer's disease), heart disease, stroke, high blood pressure, type 2 diabetes, and depression. It also improves bone health and overall quality of life.

For older adults, physical activity lowers the risk of falls and injuries from falls. For pregnant women, it reduces the risk of postpartum depression. For youth, physical activity can improve cognition, bone health, fitness, and heart health. It can also reduce the risk of depression.

New evidence shows that regular physical activity can help manage more health conditions that people already have. For example, it can improve cognition for those with dementia, multiple sclerosis, ADHD, and Parkinson's disease. Physical activity can decrease pain for those with osteoarthritis, and can reduce the progression of type 2 diabetes and hypertension.

A relatively new discovery is that physical activity has benefits that you will notice immediately. It can help reduce anxiety and blood pressure, and improve the quality of sleep and insulin sensitivity.

Who would have thought that something as simple as exercise could have such a powerful impact on your health! With the first week of Walk Kansas behind you, have you noticed any of these benefits already?

Why You Should Eat Eggs

The egg has long been a symbol of new beginnings. Now eggs are celebrating a new chapter in our diet because the 2015 version of the Dietary Guidelines lifted the limit on dietary cholesterol. While we know that high blood cholesterol is associated with heart disease, it has become evident that cholesterol in food is not the culprit — saturated fat is, and eating food high in saturated fat can trigger the body to produce cholesterol.

This gives the green light to enjoy the wonderfully nutritious egg, a high-quality protein with only 70 calories. One large egg also provides varying amounts of 13 essential vitamins and minerals and the antioxidants lutein and zeaxanthin.

Eggs are one of the most affordable and available protein sources. Refrigerated raw shell eggs will maintain quality for about 3 to 5 weeks after you bring them home. Store eggs in the refrigerator cabinet, not the door. To store them longer, beat whole eggs just until blended, pour into freezer containers and seal tightly, then label with the number of eggs and date. They will keep in your freezer for up to 1 year. To use in cooking, thaw and substitute 3 tablespoons thawed whole egg for 1 large fresh egg.

For safe storage of eggs and other refrigerated foods, make sure the temperature inside your refrigerator is 40° F or below and that your freezer temperature is 0° F or below. Label or note the date eggs were purchased so you know how long you can keep them.

Eggs are often considered breakfast food, but egg dishes can be a one-pot entrée for any meal during the day. These savory baked eggs are a delicious start to your day, and they make a special brunch/lunch or even dinner entrée.

Savory baked eggs are very simple to make. Simply layer an assortment of vegetables, then some eggs, and finish with a splash of milk; then bake and enjoy. You can use up bits and pieces of veggies you have on hand, or visit the salad bar at the grocery store and pick any veggies you want, such as spinach, peppers, red cabbage, mushrooms, tomatoes, and a little crumbled bacon.

Improve Flexibility — Zipper Stretch

Flexibility relates to the range of motion of a joint, including how far it can be bent and how far the joint can be stretched. This range will be different for all joints. For example, you may have good shoulder flexibility and poor hip flexibility. Many people will experience limited or reduced range of motion at some point in their lives as a result of an injury, infection, swelling, inflammation, or disease (such as arthritis). Range of motion exercises can help with gentle stretching aimed to move each joint as far as possible in all directions.

Flexibility, like muscle strength, decreases with age. The good news is, no matter your age, you can always improve flexibility. Stretching can help normal activities of daily living become easier. By improving your flexibility, you could reach items on a high shelf more easily or getting up and down from the floor could become easier.

As a reminder, stretches should be held for a minimum of 15 seconds (no bouncing), repeated at least twice, and should be done only when your muscles are warmed up. Stretching should not cause pain, but you should feel a slight pull and only slight discomfort. Remember to relax and breathe while you are stretching and do not hold your breath. Stretch both sides of your body equally and include stretches for your shoulders, arms, back, thighs, calves, hands, and neck. The goal is to achieve good flexibility — meaning you are able to stretch, bend, and twist — without stiffness or pain.

This **Zipper Stretch** can improve shoulder flexibility. You will need a towel or scarf to do the stretch.

Stand or sit with a straight posture. Bring right hand holding a towel or scarf behind head, grabbing the towel or scarf with the left hand at the level of lower back and pulling with the left hand to stretch right tricep. Hold this position for 15 seconds. Relax. Now assume the same position, but this time pull up with the right hand to stretch the left arm. Hold for 15 seconds. Relax. Switch arms to repeat motions. *Source: Stay Strong Stay Healthy Level 1 curriculum.*

Walk Kansas 5K

The fourth annual Walk Kansas 5K for the Fight and 1.5 mile Fun Walk will be held on the beautiful K-State campus on Saturday, May 4. While the 5K is a timed event, going the distance at any pace or style is just fine. Finishing is all that counts, so do it your way!

5K FOR THE FIGHT

The purpose of this event is to promote healthy lifestyle habits that aid in cancer prevention. All proceeds from the event will support the Johnson Cancer Research Center at K-State. We offer something for your entire family. Plan to participate in the 5K or the Fun Walk; a 50-yard dash is planned for kids. The Pride of Wildcat Marching Band will perform and Sunny 102.5 will be onsite playing music. All participants receive a souvenir shirt and other goodies, as well as water and post-race healthful snacks.

More information about the walk is available here. Click here to register today! The 5K event is $25 and the Fun walk is $20. Prices increase after April 23.

Savory Baked Eggs

Makes 2 servings

Ingredients:

1 tablespoon butter, divided
1 tablespoon finely chopped onion
1 cup fresh spinach leaves
1/2 cup sliced mushrooms
2 tablespoons chopped sweet peppers
1 tablespoon shredded carrots
8 cherry tomatoes, halved
1 tablespoon skim milk
Dash dried basil leaves
4 large eggs
Freshly ground black pepper
1 tablespoon freshly grated Parmesan cheese, optional

Directions:

1. Wash hands with soap and water.
2. Preheat oven to 375°F.
3. Clean vegetables by gently rubbing, or scrubbing with a vegetable brush, under cold running water before preparing.
4. Grease a small baking dish with 1 teaspoon butter. (You can also make individual servings by using ramekins.)
5. In a small pan, sauté onions in remaining 2 teaspoons butter over medium heat until they begin to soften. Add peppers, carrots, and mushrooms and sauté for another 1 to 2 minutes. Turn down heat and add spinach; cover and steam just until spinach is tender; remove from heat.
6. Layer vegetables in prepared baking dish and sprinkle with dried basil; crack eggs and place on top of vegetables; arrange tomatoes around eggs and splash with milk.
7. Bake at 375°F for approximately 15 minutes or until egg temperature reaches 160°F.
8. Sprinkle with freshly ground black pepper and Parmesan cheese (if desired) and serve immediately.

Nutrition Information per serving:
110 calories; 5 g fat (0 trans fat, 0.5 g saturated fat)
14 g carbohydrates; 3 g protein; 4 g fiber; 180 mg sodium