

## Keeping Kids Active

**Physical activity is so important for children!** Staying active helps kids:

- Reduce their risk of heart disease.
- Strengthen their muscles and bones.
- Maintain a healthy weight.
- Lower their risk of chronic illness such as type 2 diabetes and high blood pressure.
- Improve their cholesterol levels.

**Kids naturally want to be active.** If given the choice of screen time (video games, computer, phone, iPad) they will often choose this instead. Here are some goals:

- 1 hour or more of moderate physical activity most days of the week.
- Avoid periods of being inactive for more than 1 hour (unless sleeping).
- Kids can earn screen time by being active (activity first, then screen time).
- Be active together!

**Sports activities can be great for most kids.** There are many kids who do not want to play sports. Some ideas to keep kids active if they don't like sports are:

- Playing at a playground
- Jumping rope
- Riding a bike
- Working in the garden
- Playing catch in the yard

**Try an activity that you may not have tried before:**

- Yoga
- Zumba
- Swimming
- Martial arts
- Bowling
- Running
- Ice skating

**It is hard to find ways to be active in the winter.** Here are some winter activity ideas:

- Play music and dance (parents too!)
- Make a snowman
- Bowling
- Swimming at an indoor pool
- Ice skating (indoor or outdoor)
- Balloon games – try to keep it in the air, toss it back and forth, use paper plates as “racquets” (for kids older than 3 years)
- Indoor hopscotch (use painter’s tape on the floor)
- Simon says
- Red light, green light
- Active video games (don’t sit down while playing)
- Go sledding
- Yoga (find a video online or from the library)
- Play catch with stuffed animals
- Wheelbarrow, crab and bear-walk races
- Follow the leader
- Obstacle course – use cushions, pillows
- Animal races (hop like a bunny or frog, waddle like a duck)
- Stomp on bubble wrap
- Bean bag toss
- Tape streamers/string in the hallway as an obstacle course to get through
- Musical chairs
- Play leapfrog

### Tracking Systems

Some children/teens find that wearing something to keep track of how active they are can help motivate them.

**Pedometer:** Tracks steps only.

**LifeTrak:** A pedometer with multiple functions (time, sleep, calories burned, distance, etc.)

**Fit Bit, Up 24:** A bracelet with a computer chip that downloads to your smart phone or computer. It tracks steps, distance, sleep, calories, and more.

Your health care team may have given you this information as part of your care. If so, please use it and call if you have any questions. If this information was not given to you as part of your care, please check with your doctor. This is not medical advice. This is not to be used for diagnosis or treatment of any medical condition. Because each person's health needs are different, you should talk with your doctor or others on your health care team when using this information. If you have an emergency, please call 911. Copyright © 1/2020 University of Wisconsin Hospitals and Clinics Authority. All rights reserved. Produced by the Department of Nursing HF#7951