

Stay active! Your heart will thank you

Hey kids! Most of you know physical activity is important, but if you don't, we, and the American Heart Association, are telling you!

Being physically inactive is a major risk factor for developing coronary artery disease. It also increases the risk of stroke and such other major cardiovascular risk factors as obesity, high blood pressure, low HDL cholesterol and diabetes. The American Heart Association recommends that children and adolescents participate in at least 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity every day. This applies to children over the age of 2, and can break up the 60 minutes into two 30-minute intervals, or four 15-minute intervals. Activities should be appropriate to the age, gender and stage of physical and emotional development of the child.

Exercise or physical activity is important to both children and adults, and has been associated with longer life and degreased risk of cardiovascular disease. An important fact is that inactive children are likely to become inactive adults. Being physically active improves psychological well-being, including gaining self-confidence and higher self-esteem.

Parents should limit sedentary time, such as watching television, talking on the phone or playing computer video games. Physical activity can be fun, if the right choices are made. It's recommended parents try to be role models for children by choosing active lifestyles with more physical activity.

SOME TIPS TO HELP YOU AND YOUR FAMILY BE MORE ACTIVE ARE:

- Work out at home, and wear what you have.
- Take the stairs when possible.
- Join a sports team. It's also more fun if you exercise with a buddy what will help you reach your fitness goals.
- Just dance.
- Choose an exercise activity you love. If you do something you enjoy, you will stick with it.
- Get active for a cause, like a heart walk or one of the many walk/run events.
- A dog can be a great walking or running companion, or volunteer to walk a friend or neighbor's dog.

Editor's note – Much of this information was obtained on the American Heart Association's website.

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Centertown Elementary student Rylan Elkins enjoys playing with friends during PE time at school. Studies show exercising with a buddy can be more enjoyable and beneficial.