

Make Time for Physical Activity This Summer

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This week, I took a long look at my calendar for the next two months. These summer months will be the busiest months of the year for me, which can make it difficult to find time to fit in physical activity. The same can be true for families who are constantly on the go this time of year. According to the Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans, children ages 6 to 17 should get one hour of physical activity each day while adults should get at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity physical activity each week. Amidst all of the summertime busyness, how can we find time to fit this in for both ourselves and our younger family members?

- **Put physical activity on the calendar.** Schedule time for planned physical activity, whether solo or as a family.
- **Watch the weather.** Be prepared for all weather conditions. Stay hydrated with water and wear sunscreen.
- **Start small.** If you can't fit 150 minutes of physical activity in this week, start with what you can do.
- **Make it fun!** Some outdoor activity ideas from Nebraska Extension include going on a scavenger hunt, creating a sidewalk chalk obstacle course, and exploring trails.

Why is it important to do this? Physical activity provides important health benefits for both adults and children. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the immediate benefits of physical activity for adults include improved sleep quality, reduced feelings of anxiety, and reduced blood pressure. The long-term health benefits for adults include benefits to brain health, heart health, cancer prevention, bone strength, balance and coordination, and more. The health benefits for youth include benefits for brain health, muscular fitness, heart and lung health, bone strength, and more.

For more information, please contact me at clarawicoff@ksu.edu or 620-365-2242. In addition, if you are looking for more ways to keep your youth active and engaged this summer, consider checking out the free programs we are offering for youth throughout the Southwind District! This includes our "Choose Health: Food, Fun, and Fitness" series which will be offered in Moran and Erie starting on June 7th. The sessions focus on healthy eating and active living and are made up of six hands-on, interactive lessons with food and games. Other programs that we will be offering for youth in Allen, Bourbon, Neosho, and Woodson Counties this summer include youth sewing workshops, junk drawer robotics programs, and much, much more! Visit our website at southwind.ksu.edu to learn more and find the links to register for each of these programs.