

## FACTS SHEET – PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

### BENEFITS OF PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

- Reduces the risk of dying from coronary heart disease and of developing high blood pressure, colon cancer, and diabetes
- Can help reduce blood pressure in some people with hypertension
- Improves mental health and self-esteem
- Supports weight control and adds to sense of well-being in terms of appearance
- Enhances greater relaxation and stress reduction
- Improved posture and balance
- Develops stronger muscles and bones

### PHYSICAL ACTIVITY NEED NOT BE STRENUOUS TO ACHIEVE HEALTH BENEFITS.

- Men and women of all ages benefit from a moderate amount of daily physical activity. Whether you choose 30 minutes of brisk walking or 15-20 minutes of running you can achieve similar results.
- Naturally if you do more amounts of physical activity you can gain more health benefits. It makes sense to maintain a regular routine of physical activity to gain greater benefits. However, don't over do it, an excessive regime of exercise can add to the risk of injury. Always remember a gentle warm-up and cool down to support your body when exercising.
- If you have a sedentary job, try to get up from your desk at regular intervals, to get water or to request information. Make sure you take your lunch break and use the stairs where possible.
- Adults with chronic health problems, such as heart disease, diabetes, or obesity, or who are at high risk for these conditions should first consult a physician before beginning a new program of physical activity. Men over age 40 and women over age 50 who plan to begin a new program of vigorous activity should consult a physician to be sure they do not have heart disease or other health problems.

### PRACTICE: HOW CAN YOU BECOME MORE ACTIVE?

- The first step is to create an activity plan that lists the activities you are going to do each day. Remember to include your usual activities like, shower, school run, shopping or journey to work, and then look at the gaps. Cleaning the house and doing the gardening act as light to moderate exercise events so make sure you put them down.
- Now consider where you can carve in a bit of time for yourself? Look at the appropriate times and fill in with a fun and enjoyable activity say two times a week e.g. a yoga, dance or exercise class.
- Also build time in once or twice a week which may stretch you e.g. something more aerobic like running, swimming or cycling and aim to do that for twenty to thirty minutes. You could cycle to and from work, school or community events.
- Schedule some physical activity for each morning and/or late afternoon. Try to stick to your plan as closely as possible. Walking to and from work can really boost your sense of wellbeing, not only do you get exercise, but you also get time to clear your mind at the end of the day or prepare for it at the beginning.