

National Walking Day

From the desk of Volunteer, Michelle Kelly RDN, LD

Get Up and Move!

According to the *American Heart Association*, National Walking Day is the first Wednesday in April. The *American Heart Association* encourages Americans to “lace up their sneakers and take 30 minutes out of their day to get up and walk.”

Walking 101

Regular walking can:

- Improve cholesterol
- Lower blood pressure
- Increase energy and stamina
- Prevent weight gain

Get ready:

Remember to wear comfortable clothes and supportive shoes and don't forget brisk exercise elevates the body's temperature. When selecting shoes make sure to leave a little wiggle room between your longest toe (1/2") and the end of the shoe. Try to avoid cotton socks since they retain moisture which can lead to blisters.

Work on your technique

- **Begin with short distances.** If you haven't been active for a while start small (maybe 5-10 minutes) and gradually increase your time and/or distance.
- **Focus on posture.** Keep your head lifted, tummy pulled in and shoulders relaxed. Swing your arms naturally. **Beware** if you carry hand weight they will put extra stress on your elbows and shoulders.
- **Breathe deeply.** If you can't talk or catch your breath while walking, slow down. When first starting it is more important to get out and walk, speed will come the more your practice.

Be Safe

- **Avoid traffic accidents.** If you listen to music as you walk to help energize your workout be sure to keep the volume down and watch out for traffic. Be sure you wear light colors or reflective clothing and carry a flashlight or glow stick when walking in limited visibility.
- **Walking on sidewalks is best,** but if you have to walk in the street, try to find streets with lower speed limits. Also remember, to walk against traffic if walking in the street.
- **Know your area.** Be sure you are familiar with your surroundings and know where you can go in case of emergency. Look for businesses that are open or emergency telephones. Try to stay on well-traveled streets rather than alleys or parking lots.
- **Two heads are better than one.** The buddy systems works best. It will help discourage crime and may help alert you to dangers like speeding motorists or unleashed dogs.

For more information or to receive a free toolkit on National Walking Day visit the American Heart Association website

Resources: American Heart Association @ http://www.heart.org/HEARTORG/GettingHealthy/PhysicalActivity/Walking/Walking-101_UCM_461766_Article.jsp

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Thank you!

Questions? If you have any questions on this or any nutrition-related topic, or have an idea for a future *Healthy Bite* topic, please call our registered dietitian, Lori Harvey. You can reach her by telephone at 330-376-7717 extension 140 or by email lharvey@mobilemealsinc.org.

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In order to provide clients with the best services possible, we ask you to contact Elaine Seyerle at Mobile Meals with complaints, suggestions, or if you are not satisfied with your services. If, after your contact, you are still not satisfied with the response or have further questions, you may forward your concerns to the appropriate monitoring agency. The contact number for the Home Care Ombudsman is 1-800-421-7277.