

Good Health and Fitness Habits Can Help Lower Your Risk for Disease

Did you know that according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), regular physical activity helps improve overall health and fitness and reduces your risk for many chronic diseases?

May is Employee Health and Fitness Month and OAOHN would like to encourage you to care for yourself, and your loved ones, by reminding you of the importance of preventive care.

The CDC states that regular physical activity can help:

- Improve your mental health and mood
- Reduce your risk of cardiovascular disease
- Reduce your risk for type 2 diabetes and metabolic syndrome
- Reduce your risk of some cancers
- Strengthen your bones and muscles
- Control your weight
- Improve your ability to do daily activities and prevent falls, if you're an older adult
- Increase your chances of living healthy longer

In addition to positively impacting your physical health, fitness activities have a great impact on your spiritual health:

- A walk through nature — with the intention of communing with God or one's Higher Power — combines physical exercise and spiritual nourishment into one activity.
- Yoga combines physical postures and movements, while focusing on deep breathing and spiritual truths. You may find some instructors or types of yoga more compatible with your faith background than others.
- Avid joggers will often talk about the "high" they feel from vigorous exercise. This is the body's natural way to take care of itself through "natural pain killers" or "endorphins."

As human beings, we are integrated and inseparable in body, mind and soul. Caring for one dimension of our being (e.g. physical activity) promotes healing in all areas of our health. We feel better, are less stressed, find life more purposeful and are more thankful.

Even if you've not participated regularly in fitness activities, the CDC says that starting out with a moderate-intensity aerobic activity, like brisk walking, will offer health benefits. If you have any concerns about starting a fitness program, remember to check with your doctor.

Another great way to lower your risk for disease is by getting annual screenings and tests. Having a PCP who can coordinate your care is vital to your good health. If you don't have a PCP, just visit your insurance carrier's website, look for the "find a doctor" area and follow the instructions.