



**HEALTH MATTERS**

**INTERNATIONAL DAY OF THE OLDER PERSON**

Thursday 1 October 2015 is the International Day of the Older Person and we would like to celebrate this by promoting healthy ageing.  This information about activity and diet, although specifically for those over 65, can be used by anyone to pursue a more active lifestyle.

**Why is Activity Important?**

Physical activity will make you look and feel better.  It will give you more energy, help you relax and generally tone your body.   It is also good for your mind in reducing stress and anxiety, improving concentration and self confidence. Finally, it is good for your body in helping to control weight and a variety of medical conditions.  It also reduces your risk of heart disease, stroke and some cancers.  It will help you maintain your independence as well by helping maintain and increase the movement of your joints and decrease your risk of falls.

**How Much Activity do I Need?**

It is recommended that older people take 30 minutes of moderate exercise a day.  This will help keep your heart, lungs, muscles and bones in good working order.  If to start with you can’t manage 30 minutes, start with 10 minutes  once or twice a day (or whatever you can manage) and add 5 minutes every two weeks until you reach the 30 minutes a day. If you can manage more than 30 minutes that will help even more.

**What Type of Exercise Should I Do?**

Try to do exercise in as many ways as possible with a range of exercises such as brisk or uphill walking, gardening, swimming, and housework.  Try to be as active as possible taking the opportunity to stretch and gradually increase your strength, flexibility and balance. Moderate exercise means that you don’t have to puff and pant, but if you do that is OK - although if you have any health concerns check with your doctor or nurse before starting to exercise.  And if you already do regular exercise in excess of this, carry on doing this in a manner to suit your capability.

**Balancing Activity with Healthy Eating**

It is important to try to balance the energy being used for physical activity with energy going into your body (food and drink).  This will help you to maintain a healthy weight and will help to keep your body working well.  Ensure you eat at least three meals a day. Use the layout of the Eatwell Plate below to guide how much you should be eating of each type of food.  If you would like a leaflet with the Eatwell Plate on, please contact the Health Promotion Team via the details below.

Enjoy a wide variety of nutritious foods such as:

* Starchy foods - bread, potato, rice, pasta and cereals
* Fruit and vegetables - eat as many as you like but at least 5 a day is recommended
* Dairy foods - milk, yoghurt, cheese and eggs. Plenty of these for calcium which will slow bone loss as you age.  Choose low fat or calcium enriched where possible
* Protein - meats, fish, poultry, eggs and nuts.

In addition to this, try to eat a diet low in saturated fat to help your cholesterol level.  Cut visible fat off meat and avoid processed foods as much as possible.  Reduce your intake of foods such as biscuits, cakes and chocolate.  To control your blood pressure, it is also advisable to choose food low in salt and preferably to add no salt when cooking.  Instead add extra flavour by using herbs and spices. Use sugar in moderation in your food and choose low sugar or diet versions of foods or drinks where possible.

It is also important to make sure you drink enough fluid.  If your urine is dark yellow it is a sign you are not drinking enough.  Drinking enough will prevent dehydration, mean that the kidneys do not have to work so hard and will help prevent constipation, urine infections and kidney stones.

If you drink alcohol, limit how much you drink.  As you get older your liver is not able to manage alcohol as well.  You are more likely to have trips and falls if you drink too much.  You also need to know if alcohol is safe with any medication that you take.  If you are not sure, talk to the Pharmacist.

For further information, contact Marian Kanes, Health Promotion Trainer at [hp.trainer@publichealth.gov.sh](mailto:hp.trainer@publichealth.gov.sh), or Marian Yon, Health Promotion Coordinator at [marian.yon@publichealth.gov.sh](mailto:marian.yon@publichealth.gov.sh).

Thanks for reading.

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