

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**Family time leads to active lifestyles**

Your family is at the center of your heart, and your *healthy* heart is at the center of living well through an active lifestyle. You can keep your family—and your heart—healthy by spending quality time and having good conversation with them at mealtime.

Sitting down to eat with family at mealtime can lead to activity planning, which leads to energetic, family outings and other activities that create long-term, healthy lifestyles for everyone. Families can collectively plan shared time—bike rides, swimming, hiking, camping, walking, skiing and other physical excursions.

Time spent around the table can result in a shared planning process. Each family member acts as a support system for other members creating an ongoing atmosphere of encouragement, helping to ensure planning for future physical activities.

Physical exercise and activities are important for a child's growth and development, as well as maintaining a healthy body weight. It's important that children get 60 minutes or more of physical activity each day.

Children aren't the only members of the family that need physical exercise. Heart disease and stroke are two top causes of death in the United States among women and men. Avoiding cardiovascular diseases like these starts with a healthy diet and an *active* lifestyle.

According to the Center for Disease Control, adults should try for at least 2 hours and 30 minutes of physical exercise each week. Engaging in aerobic behavior, as well other physical activities can significantly reduce your chances for cardiovascular diseases, lower blood pressure and reduce cholesterol.

Getting on a path to a healthier lifestyle is an incremental process. Start by doing small things that can add up to accomplish the bigger picture of being healthy. Here are some ways to start living a healthier, more active life:

- Walk around the block after a meal
- Make a new house rule: no sitting still during television commercials
- Take the stairs instead of an elevator
- Find a day to spend as a family doing some kind of physical activity such as riding bikes, swimming or taking a walk

The shared moments, customs and healthy nutrition behaviors of family mealtime can help your family adopt life-changing eating patterns. You can make family-style meals a priority and introduce a healthier, more active everyday life in your home.

WVU Extension Service's Heart Health Movement is adapted from the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute's campaign and is targeted to help West Virginians become educated and enabled to take charge of their own health.

To learn more about ways WVU Extension uses trusted research and local experts to empower citizens to improve their health, contact your local WVU Extension Service county office or visit www.ext.wvu.edu.

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