

THE WHAT, WHY, AND HOW OF NCDs

WHAT ARE NONCOMMUNICABLE DISEASES?

Noncommunicable diseases, or NCDs, are conditions that are not infectious or contagious. This means you cannot catch them from someone else or spread them to others. NCDs can damage your health throughout your lifetime. Things like age and genes can affect whether NCDs develop, but certain lifestyle choices, like what you eat and how much physical activity you get, can also increase your risk of developing a chronic illness. Some examples of NCDs are type 2 diabetes and heart disease.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO LEARN ABOUT NCDs?

Noncommunicable diseases cause 41 million deaths a year globally.¹ With the right education and changes in behavior, there is an opportunity to reverse that trend. Healthy habits can last a lifetime, especially when they are established early. The earlier your family can learn about the causes of NCDs and how to reduce their risk of developing them, the sooner they can begin to build a healthier future.

HOW CAN I REDUCE MY FAMILY'S RISK OF DEVELOPING NCDs?

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), the best way to reduce your family's chance of developing NCDs is to reduce the major risk factors.² The following list of recommendations can help your family make the healthiest choices possible.

- ❑ Make nutritious food choices.
- ❑ Be active.
- ❑ Don't smoke.
- ❑ For those over 21 years of age, if you drink alcohol, always drink responsibly and in moderation. Never drink and then drive.

Need more information about nutrition and activity guidelines? Check out the [Family Webpage \(www.FutureWellKids.com/Families\)](http://www.FutureWellKids.com/Families)!

¹ <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/noncommunicable-diseases>

² <https://www.who.int/activities/preventing-noncommunicable-diseases>

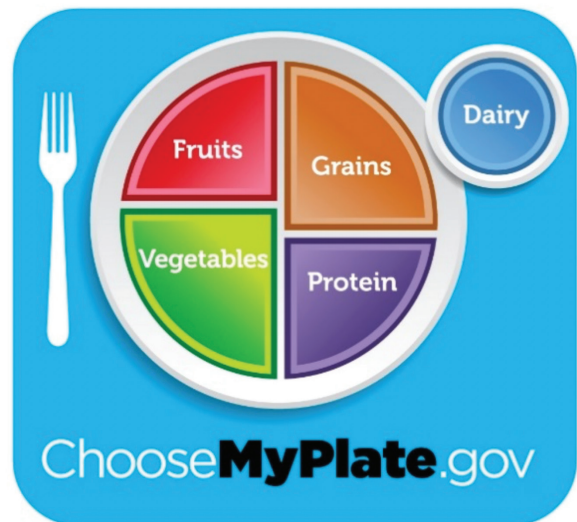
NUTRITION GUIDELINES

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), the best way to reduce your family's chance of developing noncommunicable diseases (NCDs) is to reduce the major risk factors.¹ One of those major risk factors is lack of proper nutrition.

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) recommends fitting your food choices into the five food groups of MyPlate.² You can explore the MyPlate website ([ChooseMyPlate.gov](https://www.choosemyplate.gov)) with your family to discover new ways to “fill your five.” A few examples of each food group include:

- **Fruits (~2 cups per day):** bananas, apples, dried fruit like raisins, and 100% fruit juice like orange juice
- **Vegetables (~2–3 cups per day):** dark green like spinach, red and orange like carrots, beans and peas, starchy like corn, and other vegetables like peppers, cucumbers, and onions
- **Whole Grains (~5–7 oz per day):** bagels, biscuits, bread, crackers, oatmeal, pasta, rice, and tortillas
- **Protein (~5–6 oz per day):** beef, pork, chicken, fish, eggs, nuts and seeds, soy products like tofu, and beans
- **Dairy (~3 cups per day):** milk, yogurt, cheese, and calcium-fortified soymilk

A noncommunicable disease (NCD) is any disease that is not contagious and cannot be spread to others, like the flu.



However, it is not just about what you try to put *on* your plates. It is also about what you try to keep *off* your plates! The WHO also recommends limiting the following³:

- Added sugar
- Salt
- Saturated and trans fats

¹ <https://www.who.int/activities/preventing-noncommunicable-diseases>

² <https://www.choosemyplate.gov/eathealthy/start-simple-myplate>

³ <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/healthy-diet>

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), the best way to reduce your family's chance of developing noncommunicable diseases (NCDs) is to reduce the major risk factors.¹ One of those major risk factors is lack of physical activity.

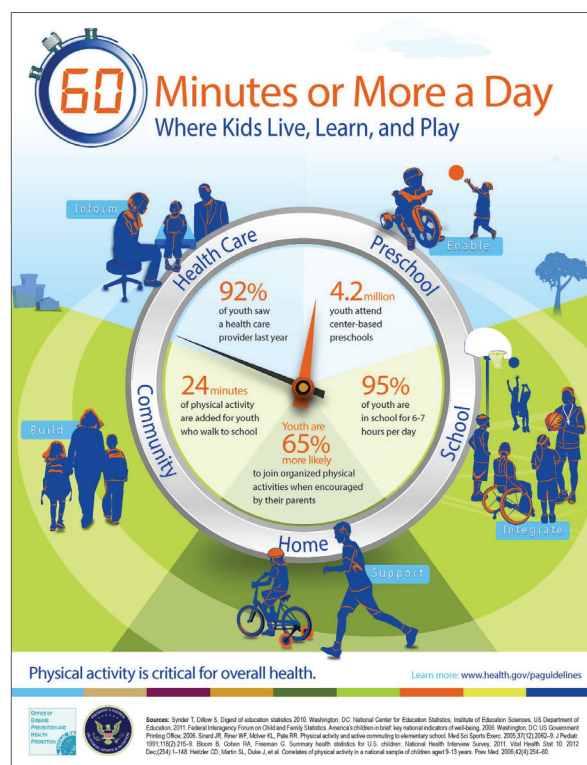
The US Department of Health and Human Services reports regular physical activity can help reduce the risk of developing NCDs. They recommend 60 minutes (or more!) of moderate to vigorous activity each day.²

- **Moderate:** Moderate exercise raises your heart rate and gets your blood moving throughout your body. It can help your mood, increase your energy levels, and lower your blood pressure.
- **Vigorous:** Vigorous exercise raises your heart rate to a level that is most beneficial for your body. It reduces your risk for heart disease. It can help your mood, increase your energy levels, and lower your blood pressure.

The following checklist can help your family incorporate physical activity into your daily lives. Talk about it with your family and mark your favorites. Feel free to add to the list!

- ❑ Take a long walk
- ❑ Have a family dance party to your favorite music
- ❑ Go for a bicycle ride
- ❑ Do jumping jacks during the commercial break of your favorite TV show
- ❑ Play a game of soccer as a family
- ❑ Swim laps
- ❑ Train for and run a race like a virtual/in-person 5k

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¹ <https://www.who.int/activities/preventing-noncommunicable-diseases>

² https://health.gov/paguidelines/second-edition/pdf/Physical_Activity_Guidelines_2nd_edition.pdf