

Health Choices

Taking back control of your health and life



Taking back control

There are many times in our life when things can seem somewhat . . . well . . . out of control. While it is true that there are many things going on in our lives today that are outside of our control, there are some things that we *can* control. What are those controllable things? Choices! Yes, choices. A choice is *“the act of selecting or making a decision when faced with two or more possibilities”*. In every moment, we make choices, and those choices determine who we become, what we do and experience. Our choices can give us hope and a future or can lead to regret and despair. They also play an important role in shaping our health. Everyone can make decisions that can positively or negatively affect their health and well-being. Take a moment to think about some of the choices that your family has made this past year to improve or protect your physical and mental health.

Choosing movement

Choosing to be physically active most days of the week, at a pace that gets your heart rate up is one of the healthiest choices you and your family can make. Research consistently shows that regular physical activity improves health, prevents disease and, most importantly in the middle of a pandemic, strengthens the immune system. By choosing to move more, we can take an important step towards improving our health and well-being.

Finding the motivation to move more

What motivates people to move more? Researchers have found three motivating factors! People feel motivated to make healthy choices:

1. When they can take direct action that will result in real change.
2. When they feel they have the knowledge and skills needed to improve their health.
3. When they have a sense of belonging and attachment to other people.

This “Health Choices” module is designed to help you and your family find the motivation to move together, think together, and be together as we all work together to improve and protect our health.

Move Together!

Motivator #1: People are motivated to act when they feel they have the knowledge and skills needed to improve their health. Did you know that there are multiple benefits related to regular participation in physical activity, sports, and physical education? These benefits are not just limited to physical health. Check out the list below:

1. **Physical-** improvements in fitness, muscular strength, blood pressure, blood glucose, weight status, [nutrition](#), and [sleep](#)
2. **Emotional-** improvements in mood, body image, self-confidence, [resilience](#), [feeling good](#), and managing of [stress](#), depression, and anxiety
3. **Individual-** improvements in [life skills](#), time management, goal setting, self-discipline, self-control, sportsmanship, honesty, and integrity
4. **Social-** improvements in [positive relationships](#), social inclusion and acceptance, [teambuilding](#), civic participation, and bridging differences
5. **Intellectual-** improvements in learning, [focus](#) and attention, school engagement, academic performance, and educational attainment
6. **Financial-** improvements in job success, productivity and performance, and reductions in absenteeism and medical health care costs



Did you also know that schools have created a variety of opportunities for your child to be physically active and develop the knowledge, skills, and confidence to be physically active for a lifetime? These opportunities include physical education, as well as physical activity before, during, and after school! You can support your local school-based programming by participating in evening or weekend special events, or by serving as physical education or physical activity volunteers. You can also support your child's health by starting your own family physical activity routine at home. When families *move together*, they spend additional time together and experience all of the health benefits together.

What Works to Get Kids Active
Schools and communities can help kids get the 60 minutes of physical activity they need each day.

Elementary School USA

- provide in-class activity breaks +19 min
- renovate parks +12 min
- add after-school programs +10 min
- support walking/cycling to school +16 min
- require daily P.E. +23 min

Source: Bassett, D.R. et al. (2013). Estimated Energy Expenditures for School-Based Policies and Active Living. *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*, 42(2), 108-113. Link to paper <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0749379712008057>

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Think Together!

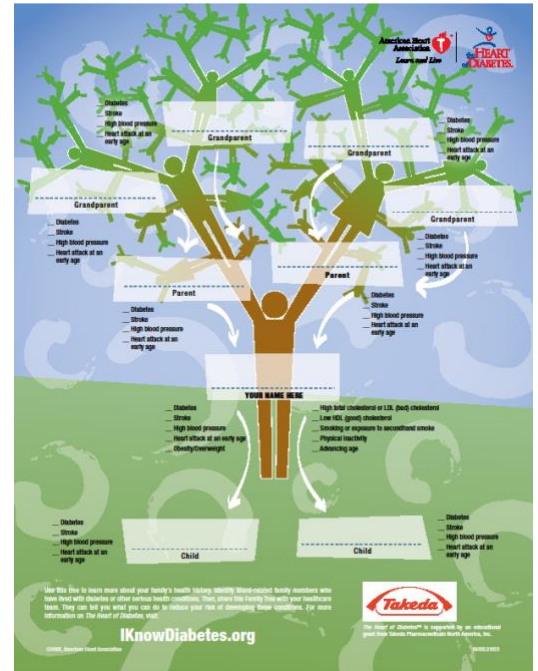
Motivator #2: People feel motivated to make healthy choices like moving more when they can take direct action that will result in real change. So, let's *think together* and make an action plan to turn our daily choices to *move more* into a routine. The first step in making a family action plan is knowing your story!

Knowing your story . . . lessons from the past

Think for a moment about your family. How far back can you track family members? How far back did you have relationships with those family members who have left us? Are you able to track all living family members? Grandparents, Great-grandparents, Aunts, Uncles, Siblings? What comes to mind when you think about these family members? Do you have good memories of them and times you spent together? Playing, dancing, cooking, working together?

Are there also sad memories? Family members who became ill or couldn't play, dance, cook or work together with you anymore because of their chronic illness? Heart conditions, diabetes, kidney problems? High blood pressure or cholesterol or even COVID-19? Take a moment to complete this [Family Health History Tree](#) from the American Heart Association. In the past, we tended to accept the health challenges of our parent's generation as our inheritance, and we learned to accept it. If our parents had Type 2 Diabetes, then the child is pre-disposed, or more than likely going to have Type 2 Diabetes as well.

Whether you know your 'family history' or not, here is a place where you *do have control!* By focusing on being physically active, you change your story and the language that will be under your name on the family tree! Making movement a family goal will also change the trajectory of every member of your family. This way you are better prepared to avoid being diagnosed with those chronic health conditions that have taken other family members away from playing, dancing, cooking, and working. There are also health choices we can make even after a diagnosis of a health condition that we may not have been able to prevent. By choosing physical activity, you will be better prepared to fight off seasonal health challenges like the flu or common cold or even the next pandemic!



Writing your story . . . changing the future

But, how do you know if you and your family are ready to make the change to move more? Take this three-question quiz below.

1. In a typical week, how many days do you do physical activity for 60 minutes or more?

- ZERO ONE TWO THREE FOUR FIVE SIX OR MORE

If you answered between ZERO and FOUR to question 1, go to answer 2. If you answered FIVE or SIX OR MORE” to question 1, go to question 3.

2. How many months have you been doing 60 minutes of physical activity on 5 or more days per week?

- Less than 6 months (“I have started to change”)
- 6 months or more (“I’ve changed”)

3. Do you think you will start doing 60 minutes of physical activity 5 or more days a week in the next six months?

- No, and I do not intend to in the next six months (“I don’t need to change”)
- Yes, I intend to in the next six months (“I might change”)
- Yes, I intend to in the next 30 days (“I will change. Really!”)

Your answers to the questions above can help you to identify how ready you and your family are to commit to changing your physical activity behaviors. Use the suggestions in the table below to increase your family’s willingness to change.

Willingness to Change	Tips to make the Change
“I don’t need to change”	Need more evidence that movement is medicine? Check out this 9-minute video by Dr. Mike Evans .
“I might change”	Make a list of the pros and cons of moving more. Identify the obstacles that are making it difficult for you to change.
“I will change. Really!”	Goal setting is a great start to making a change. Start small and then increase over time. And don’t forget to write your goals down!
“I have started to change”	Reward your successes. Revisit your goals and revise them as needed.
“I’ve changed”	Continue to integrate more movement into different aspects of your family life.

Knowing yourself . . . what are your family’s physical activity preferences?

Knowing what your family’s physical activity preferences are is a second important piece of your physical activity action plan. If your family is in the “*I might change*” or “*I will change. Really!*” stage, this is a great place to begin to understand what you and your family like to do to move more. Maybe it’s starting out as a family walk after dinner, where you can share your experiences of the day, or a friendly competition on an active video game. Give everyone in the family a chance to pick their favorite of the many activities on the [InPACT](#)

at [Home Challenge Calendars](#) and then build your own schedule of activities. This way, everyone has input into the activities. Once you have gone through all the selected activities, you can decide, as a family, what you will take on as your routine activities.

Understand that some family members (even the adults) may have previously tried a new activity (by themselves or in a group), but had little success and became discouraged, or embarrassed. Maybe it was because of low fitness levels, low body image, or they were teased. Make sure that the focus when moving together is having fun! Enjoyment of physical activity is one of the strongest predictors of future activity in both children and adults.

Health Choices Calendar

Week	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
#1	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Each day this week, try out a new type of movement by completing the video or activity listed!	Prepare for the month of activity ahead by completing this Range of Motion workout as a family	Get the whole family moving with this Just Move workout video!	Practice your balance and strength skills with this video focused on Standing Poses for Balance and Leg Strength	Enjoy some relaxing activity with your family by completing this Family Yoga Class workout	Complete this Family HIIT workout . Afterwards discuss what the hardest move was for each of you!	Get ready to perform and complete this Frozen themed Dancing and Karaoke video	Spring-clean your home as a family by each taking a room to clean. Play some music and have fun with it!
#2	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
Continue working out and bonding as a family this week with the listed videos and activities!	Start the week off strong with this Family Workout	Sing along with and complete this Head and Shoulders, Knees and Toes video	Work on your flexibility today with a workout focused on Stretches and Exercises	Work on your lower body strength by completing this Leg Day workout as a family	Do some fun stretching as a family with this Gymnastics Warm-up and Stretch video	Get your family together for a family game night and play Fitness Monopoly	Enjoy the outdoors while getting some physical activity in by cleaning up the yard or section of your neighborhood!
#3	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
This week, you get to choose which activity you do each day! Try to agree on one as a family or try out both options	Choose one of the following: Yoga and Stretching Or Family Yoga	Choose one of the following: Kickboxing Combo video Or Arm Circuit video	Choose one of the following: Power Punching Or Fitness Drumming	Choose one of the following: Head and Shoulders, Knees and Toes Or Move and Freeze	Choose one of the following: Movement Flow Or Coach Says	Choose one of the following: Full Body Workout Or Cha Cha Slide	Get your whole family together and go for a long walk
#4	22	23	24	25	26	27	28
For the final week, you get to pick the activities! Choose a family activity for each day within the category specified and have fun!	Choose your own family stretch! Try out a couple if family members have different favorite stretches	Choose an upper body activity to complete as a family	Choose your own family yoga poses. Pick some favorites you've previously done or try out some new poses together!	Choose your own family leg or lower body focused activity to complete	Choose your own family cardio activity. Try out a long walk, playing a game outside, or even having a competition!	Choose your playlist for a family dance. Then have some by having a dance party to the songs you choose!	Choose your own family activity! It can be one from earlier in the calendar or a completely new one you want to try



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Knowing your community . . . what are the available options?

Knowing what safe and accessible physical activity options exist in your neighborhood is an important part of creating a family action plan to move more. Not all communities are the same and not all neighborhoods have a safe place to be active. So first, take an inventory of your neighborhood. Do you frequently see children outside playing? Do you have sidewalks, cross walks, bike lanes, and streetlights? If so, then you live in a “walkable” neighborhood.

If you don’t have these neighborhood features, are there other safe spaces in your neighborhood to be active? Have you ever explored your community resources? Many communities have community centers that offer use of facilities such as community [pools](#), tracks, parks, gyms or fitness centers. Local school districts often offer open gym night or



access to the school playgrounds or ball fields. Some fitness businesses offer free introductory events with discounted family rates to join. City and county parks not only have playgrounds, but often conduct special events to draw families to their locations. Did you know that [Michigan](#) offers 74 State Parks, 12 State Forests, and National Parks? You can find a county park nearest to you by entering your zip code and the distance

you are willing to travel on the [micountyparks.org](#) website. You can find a city park near you at the [Michigan Recreation and Park Association](#) Website.

If moving more in your neighborhood is not an option and you don't have a park or recreation center near you, then the [InPACT at Home exercise videos](#) may be the perfect solution to get your family moving. Our workout videos provide fun, easy ways to do a short workout with little to no equipment in the comforts of your own home. You'll be surprised what these moments of movement can do for you and the rest of your family.



Be Together!

Motivator #3: People are motivated to make healthy choices when they have a sense of belonging and attachment to other people. As a parent, caregiver, or family member there are four important strategies you can use to support your child and create a sense of belonging centered around physical activity. Check out the list of strategies below:

1. **Emotional support-** encourage your child to be physically active. Talk to them about the activities they enjoy, give them praise when they complete an activity and watch them perform physical activities.
2. **Logistical support-** provide transportation and equipment for your child to participate in physical activities.
3. **Informational support-** provide positive and constructive feedback on your child's engagement in physical activity. Provide instruction and advice on how to be physically active.
4. **Co-participation-** engage in physical activities with your child.

Family engagement is increasingly emerging as a primary predictor for children's success. According to the [MiFamily: Michigan's Family Engagement Framework](#), family experiences are significant predictors of cognitive skills and social-emotional skills, such as motivation, attention, impulse control, and self-confidence. By choosing to move together, think together, and be together, you are developing a collaborative relationship with your child to support and improve their learning, development, and health.

Getting Started . . . Moving Together at Home and in Your Community

There are realistic and safe options to moving more in your home and community. Below are a few ideas:

- If your family has a safe trail or route, go for a walk! This is the most common activity across every age group.
- Try [InPACT at Home exercise videos](#) for indoor activities. Start with one 8-minute video every other day before dinner. To view these videos on television, find your local public broadcasting station

- Create a chore chart with rotating responsibilities. Household chores including sweeping, mopping, vacuuming, dusting, gardening, mowing the lawn and all tasks that involve the use of large muscle groups also count toward your physical activity minutes.
- If you live in an apartment building, put on your headphones, and climb some stairs or set up a balcony dance party with your neighbors.
- Whether your child is younger or older, there are many indoor activities that you can do together to move more. Make family game time active. Activities like ‘Head and Shoulders, Knees and Toes’, ‘Simon Says’ and others will help young children learn as they move. Movement games like ‘Twister’, ‘Red light, Green light’, ‘Red Rover’ and others can keep everyone laughing, which is also a healthy behavior.
- Hold a family dance night where you dance to each member of the family’s current favorite song or learn a new dance together, like a line dance, the Cupid Shuffle or Cha-Cha Slide or even a square dance! The more your children see you move, the more they will move.



What if my family relapses? We start exercising, and then stopped!

What happens when you and your child skip a day of movement and it turns into a week, a month, and now two months? Don’t worry . . . we’ve all been there before. Missing one day of movement is not the end of the world, but if you and your family continue to find reasons not to exercise or some experiences an injury that prevents them from being active for an extended period, then you all could be at risk of reverting back to an inactive lifestyle. Check out the suggestions below to help prevent activity relapse.

1. **Re-evaluate your willingness to change** your physical activity behavior by retaking the willingness quiz above.
 - If you are in the “*I don’t need to change*” stage, remind yourself of benefits of exercise. Your family started exercising for a reason. Reconnect with your “why”!
 - If you are in the “*I might change*” stage, take another look at the obstacles that are preventing your family from moving more and develop a plan to overcome those obstacles.
 - If you are in the “*I will change. Really!*” stage, set realistic goals based on your family’s current activity levels.
2. **Finding a new hobby that involves movement.** This is another great way to get back on the activity wagon. Engage in a family discussion to figure out how everyone can make the family physical activity routine more fun and enjoyable.
3. Finally, **find small windows of time to increase your movement.** Recent research shows that moving as little as one minute at time can produce numerous mental and physical health benefits.

“Live in a Way Today That Will Help You Thrive Tomorrow”!

Take a moment to watch this [one-minute video](#) and ask yourself: What will the last ten years of your life look like? - The video goes on to ask you a series of questions: *“Will you be Quick enough for a game of tag with your grandchild, strong enough to embrace every moment? Will you grow old with vitality or get old with disease? It’s time to decide.”* By choosing to move more, you and your family can take an important step towards improving your health and well-being and change your future!

AUTHOR BIOGRAPHY



Evilia Jankowski, MSA, BSN, RN

Evilia Jankowski has been a nurse for more than 40 years and a school nurse for 29 of those years; first in Arizona and then in Michigan. She is currently the State School Nurse Consultant for Michigan. Evilia has worked at the local and intermediate school district level. In this capacity, she has provided support for both Public School Districts and Public-School Academies in Genesee and Wayne County, MI. She is also a Past-President of the Michigan Association of School Nurses.

Evilia has partnered with national school health stakeholders including the CDC, American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), National Association of School Nurses (NASN) and the National Association of State School Nurse Consultants (NASSNC) on projects such as the School Asthma Management Program SAMPRO, Indoor Air Quality, School Emergency Triage Training, Focus on the Framework for 21st Century School Nurse Practice, and other professional development programs for school nurses. She believes this is an exciting time for school nurses and the standardized training and resources that are available now are vital to ensure that student needs are met to allow them to be healthy, safe and ready to learn.



Rebecca Hasson, PhD

Rebecca Hasson is an associate professor of Movement Science and director of the Childhood Disparities Research Laboratory (CDRL) at the University of Michigan School of Kinesiology. She holds a dual appointment as associate professor of Nutritional Sciences in the School of Public Health. Prior to her time at U-M, Dr. Hasson was W.K. Kellogg Health Scholars Postdoctoral Fellow at the Center on Social Disparities in Health at the University of California-San Francisco. She completed her PhD in Kinesiology at the University of Massachusetts. Dr. Hasson enjoys using her expertise in pediatric physical activity, implementation science, and health equity research to improve the health and well-being of children and

their families across the state of Michigan. Over the past eight years, Dr. Hasson’s research has focused on the development and implementation of physical activity interventions in school and home environments, especially for low-income and ethnic minority pediatric populations. As Principal Investigator of the “Interrupting Prolonged sitting with ACTivity” (InPACT) program, she has rigorously tested the feasibility of implementing InPACT activity breaks in classroom settings; tailored InPACT to enhance implementation fidelity and flexibility; and augmented InPACT sustainability by strengthening district wellness policies. During the COVID-19 pandemic she adapted InPACT for dissemination in the home, and her programming is currently being broadcast on public television across the state of Michigan.

