

Your Health Matters

WALK YOUR WAY TO BETTER HEALTH

By mid-February the best intentioned New Year's resolutions to get fit begin to wane. Add cold weather and the idea of curling up on the couch by the fireplace with a steaming cup of coffee sounds much better than going to the gym or walking around the park. The good news is, with a commitment of just 30 minutes a day, you can **walk** yourself to better health.

"Research shows that walking is one of the simplest ways to make changes to your health," says administrator Linda Harman. "In fact, studies show that walking briskly has just as much or more benefit to your health than running."

The benefits of walking include,

- reducing your risk of heart disease and stroke,
- lowering your risk of high blood pressure and high cholesterol,
- reducing your risk of Type 2 diabetes, osteoporosis, and breast and colon cancer,
- maintaining a healthy body weight, and
- feeling more positive and more energetic.

Walking is easy. It's safe. It is the least expensive type of exercise – all you need is a good pair of shoes. Walking has the lowest dropout rate of any type of exercise.

"To get started walking to better health, just take the first step," urges Harman. "Set a reachable goal for each day, even if you just add a few minutes at a time. Before long you'll find yourself gaining strength and moving toward the goal of 30 minutes a day."

If you can't seem to find 30 minutes in your busy day, break your walking up into smaller sessions.

- Walk your dog.
- Play with your children in the yard.
- Hit the trails with your spouse.
- Walk the golf course instead of using a golf cart.
- Park farther from the door.
- Take the stairs instead of the elevator or escalator.

Before you know it, walking will become a part of your daily routine and you'll begin to see results. Walking 30 minutes a day can change your life for the better – but you have to take the first step!

The Montgomery County Health Department loves taking care of your family, and works every day to protect, promote and improve health in our community. To learn more, call 573-564-2495 or visit us online at www.montgomerycountyhealth.org or on Facebook or Twitter @healthymoco. ■



Linda Harman

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