



Pennington & Red Lake Counties Wellness Newsletter

January 2023



Winter Walking

The onset of cold weather can make us want to cozy up indoors and embrace a more sedentary season. However, the need for physical activity does not disappear with the warmth.

Week 1: Find a walking routine

■ **Convenience is key.** Finding an easy and convenient way to include walking into your daily life will make getting your physical activity in more sustainable.

■ **Any time is better than no time.** 150 minutes might seem like a lot. Break it down into smaller daily increments. Do not discount the value of a short 10-minute walk. Those minutes add up.

Week 2: Walk outdoors safely

■ **Plan ahead.**

- o Check the weather before heading out for a walk and plan your route and gear accordingly. Sometimes, it may be wisest to stay indoors.

- o Allow for extra transportation time. Slower is safer, especially with icy surfaces.

- o Stick to designated walkways as much as possible.

- o When entering a building, remove snow and water from shoes to avoid slipping.

■ **Dress appropriately.**

- o Dress in layers.
- o Wear flat footwear with good traction.
- o Cover areas prone to frostbite including hands and ears.
- o Wear bright and/or reflective clothing to increase your visibility to others
- o Wrapping a scarf around your nose and mouth can prevent freezing air from agitating the lungs.

Faces masks for COVID prevention can protect your lungs and keep your face warm, too.

■ **Walk like a penguin.**

- o Take shorter steps at a slower pace to avoid slipping risk and allow for increased reaction time.

- o Keep hands out of pockets and avoid carrying items that hinder your balance or arm movements.

- o Do not text or scroll on cell phones while winter walking.

- o If a fall should occur, try to prevent serious injury using the following tips:

- o Aim to hit the ground with the thigh, hip, then shoulder.

- o Prioritize protecting your head from hitting the ground.

- o Do not brace yourself with outstretched arms.

Week 3: Beyond the physical benefits

■ Opportunity for social connection.

■ Improve mental health and wellbeing.

■ Stay energized and improve focus.

■ Reduce risk of cognitive impairment.



Week 4: Accessible winter walking

- Find indoor winter walking options.
 - Use mobility devices. A walking stick, ski poles, or a cane with a retractable ice pick on the bottom can help with balance.
 - Seek out programs and support. Connecting with a friend, colleague, family member or program for support might help you get started or maintain your winter walking goals.
- Winter Walking Toolkit MDH (1).pdf

Carbon Monoxide Safety

Check Carbon Monoxide Alarms

- Make sure there is a working carbon monoxide (CO) alarm on every level of your home and near sleeping areas.
- Test CO alarms every month to make sure they are working correctly.
- Replace CO alarms according to the manufacturer's instructions.

Prevent CO Poisoning

- If you need to warm a vehicle, remove it from the garage immediately after starting it. Do not leave the engine running even if the garage door is open.
- Generators and grills should be used outside the home, away from windows and doors.
- On the outside of your home, make sure vents for the dryer, furnace, stove and fireplace are clear of snow and other debris.

In an Emergency, Leave the Home Immediately

- If the CO alarm sounds, immediately leave the home. Call 911 or the fire department after you are outside the home. Remain outside until emergency personnel arrive.

2021_co_safety_checklist.pdf (safekids.org)

COVID-19 Treatment at No Cost

If you are a Minnesota resident, tested positive for COVID-19, and experienced symptoms in the last five days, you may be eligible to receive treatment at no cost. Health insurance is optional and NOT required to receive treatment. You need a mobile device. To access care, download the Cue Health App or call 1-833-283-8378.
<https://care.cuehealth.com/mn>

Parenting Tips

Have you ever thought about being a youth mentor?

Here are a few facts about the positivity of being one for the youth and the adult.

Benefits for youth:

- Increased high school graduation rates
- Lower high school dropout rates
- Healthier relationships and lifestyle choices
- Better attitude about school
- Higher college enrollment rates and higher educational aspirations
- Enhanced self-esteem and self-confidence
- Improved behavior, both at home and at school
- Stronger relationships with parents, teachers, and peers
- Improved interpersonal skills

Benefits for mentors:

- Increased self-esteem
- A sense of accomplishment
- Creation of networks of volunteers
- Insight into childhood, adolescence, and young adulthood
- Increased patience
- Mentoring can help youth as they go through challenging life transitions, including dealing with stressful changes at home or transitioning to adulthood. Close, healthy, supportive relationships between mentors and mentees that last for a significant portion of time (i.e., more than one year) are central to success. Choose to be a mentor today!



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