

HOW TO LIVE **542018**.orgSM



HEALTHCARE

Healthcare settings provide a great opportunity to assist community members with improving physical activity and nutrition habits and achieving and maintaining a healthy weight. It is estimated that each month 20 percent of the U.S. population visits a physician's office, giving healthcare systems a chance to influence many people. By providing patients with necessary screenings, information and resources, healthcare providers have the ability to improve the health of many people within a community.

Listed below are some suggestions to help healthcare providers create healthy environments and guidelines for people within their facilities.

General ways staff can help:

- Routinely screen and counsel patients on Body Mass Index (BMI) status following the evidence-based practice guidelines (BMI of 25-29 – overweight, BMI > 30 – obese). If the patient is overweight, assess their level of readiness to make changes using behavioral counseling or motivational interviewing techniques. Evaluating a patient's motivation and commitment levels will help healthcare providers give them individualized resources and information for success.
 - Have patients take a focused family history assessment to determine previous and current health behaviors related to diet and physical activity. Determining healthy and unhealthy patterns can allow patients to see which areas they are doing well in and which areas may need improvement.
 - Provide a physical activity and nutrition prescription for patients to follow that is agreed upon by the physician and the patient. Setting small, achievable goals will allow patients to adhere to the plan and get them excited about beginning to reach these goals.
 - Promote wellness and prevention resources included in health insurance plans, and refer patients to outreach programs in the community such as health education classes, reduced cost fitness club memberships and family health events and activities. Patients will enjoy the additional information about helpful community resources.
- Implement a systems or team approach to identify and follow-up with at-risk, overweight and obese patients. Use community partnerships to facilitate active referrals of patients who need additional resources about physical activity and quality nutritious foods and beverages. Referrals may be made to other professionals such as registered dietitians, exercise physiologists, behavioral psychologists, and many others. Providing computer-assisted guidance, weekly phone calls or e-mails for information and reinforcement, tracking logs, self-assessment tools and skill-building tools may also motivate patients to improve or maintain their health.
 - Make sure staff members are healthy role models for all patients. Healthcare providers who live healthy lifestyles will feel more comfortable advocating for healthy behaviors with their patients.

2 Ways YOU Can Make a Difference!

1. *Display information about programs and resources useful to families in the waiting room. This is a great way for patients to take information about healthy eating and active living home with them to share with their families.*
2. *Allow patients to ask any nutrition and physical activity questions they have at each visit. Having candid conversations about health and wellness will make them feel more comfortable asking for additional help and increase adherence to their prescribed health improvement plan.*

Increasing physical activity:

- Provide brochures and posters about physical activity in the waiting room area. People will be able to browse the information while they wait for their appointment and learn new facts and ideas about physical activity.
- Advise adults and children about daily physical activity recommendations. Adults should participate in a minimum of 30 minutes or more of moderate intensity exercise on most, if not all, days of the week. Children and adolescents should participate in at least 60 minutes of moderate physical activity most days of the week. Participating in more minutes than the recommended levels of physical activity can lead to better weight control and health improvement.
- If patients need specific exercise programs, refer them to outside professionals such as exercise physiologists or personal trainers to guide them with their physical fitness aspirations. These professionals may give them necessary information on proper exercise techniques and provide motivation to remain physically active.

2 Ways YOU Can Make a Difference!

1. *Assess patients' current levels of physical activity, and explore what barriers may be keeping them from being physically active. Determining these barriers is the first step to overcoming them.*
2. *If patients are capable and healthy, ask them to research exercises they can do at home that will cost them little to no money. Once they know the many options for exercising at home they will be more likely to try them out.*

Improving nutrition:

- Provide brochures and posters about nutrition in the waiting room area. People will be able to browse the information while they wait for their appointment and learn new facts and ideas about how they can make healthy food and beverage choices.
- Advise adults and children about daily nutritional recommendations. These recommendations vary from person-to-person, and can be found on the website www.MyPlate.gov. Overall, a general healthy eating plan for children, adolescents and adults is one that emphasizes the consumption of fruits and vegetables, whole grains, fat-free/low-fat dairy products and lean meats, and is low in saturated fat, trans fat, cholesterol, sodium/salt and added sugars. Eating plans should also include nutrient-dense foods or foods low in calories but high in nutritional value from each food group. These guidelines can be individualized further using the website www.MyPlate.gov.
- For staff members and the employee environment, create an atmosphere that promotes wellness by offering healthy food and beverage options in cafeteria and break room areas. These healthy options will allow employees to make better choices throughout the day.
- Make water available to all patients and staff throughout the day and promote its consumption.

2 Ways YOU Can Make a Difference!

1. *Offer resources and referrals for patients looking to improve their diet. Referrals may be to a dietitian, or even referring patients to a local cooking class to improve their cooking skills.*
2. *Co-locate a farmers' market on the hospital or clinic campus for patients and staff. This way it is very convenient for everyone at the facility to purchase these local, healthy foods.*



Decreasing screen time:

- Advise patients to limit total screen time (TV, video games, computer, etc.) to less than 2 hours per day. Also, advise them to allow no screen time for children under the age of 2, limit children over 2 years old to less than 2 hours of screen time daily and to keep TV sets, DVDs, video games and computers out of children's bedrooms.
- Recommend patients spend their time being physically active or volunteering in the community rather than spending their time in front of a screen. By researching what is available within the community, they may find a new hobby or activity.

2 Ways YOU Can Make a Difference!

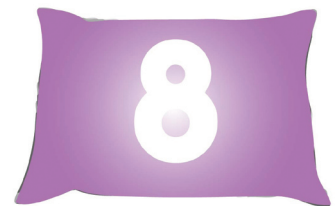
1. *Many hospitals and clinics have TVs in the waiting room. If TVs are not able to be removed from these areas, they can be used as another health promoting resource for patients waiting for their upcoming appointments.*
2. *Have patients evaluate how many hours they spend in front of a screen every day, and discuss how they can decrease this in ways that are easy for them. They may be very surprised by how many hours they spend in front of a screen every day, and that may motivate them to use their time to improve their health in other ways.*

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