

Supporting Healthy Behaviors

It is widely known people with I/DD have higher rates of obesity, and diabetes and tend to get less physical activity than those without I/DD. It is important to support them in living a healthy lifestyle.

A healthy lifestyle includes a healthy eating plan, regular physical activity, rest, and avoiding drugs, alcohol, and tobacco. It also includes positive social and emotional supports. Finding balance in all these areas helps with overall wellness and quality of life.

Physical Activity

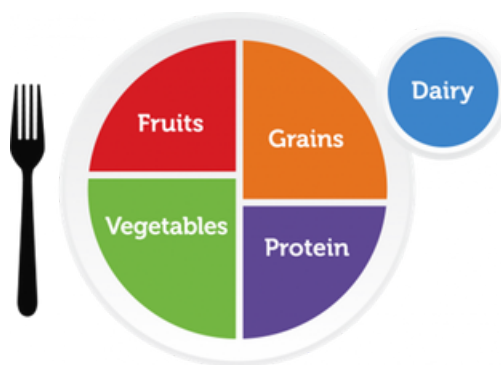
Physical activity and moving your body is important for a wide variety of reasons. Being active improves energy and makes you feel better. It also helps with controlling weight. Try to find physical activities the person enjoys and then build it into their weekly routine. Many times, these activities can be with friends making them more fun.

Before starting a new activity routine, it's a good idea to check with the persons' doctor to make sure it is safe. This is especially true for anyone that is aging, has been sedentary or has health problems.

Nutrition

Making healthy food choices can be challenging, choosing foods that are too high in sugar or saturated fat, can lead to:

- Obesity
- Heart Disease
- Diabetes
- High blood pressure
- Stroke



Using the healthy diet guidelines from [myplate.gov](https://www.myplate.gov) is a good place to start.



Water

Another way for a person to live a healthy life is by drinking water. 8-12 cups of water a day is recommended for most people. Dehydration is a common cause of headaches and digestive problems. Our bodies are about 60% water!

- Water lubricates joints and cushions the brain.
- Helps maintain blood pressure and delivers oxygen through our blood.
- Helps control weight.
- Regulates body temperature.
- Flushes body wastes and helps kidneys.
- Keeps your skin hydrated and looking healthy.



Sleep

Getting enough sleep is important for overall health. Not getting enough sleep has been linked to depression, suicide, and risk-taking behavior. It also increases your risk for obesity, high blood pressure, diabetes, and heart disease. Some tips to help get enough sleep include:

- Try to go to sleep and wake up at the same time.
- Get 7-8 hours of sleep per night.
- Physical activity during the will help.
- Don't have caffeine, large meals or alcohol before bed.
- Turn off electronic screens 30 minutes before bed.
- Make sure the room is dark and a comfortable temperature.



Smoking and Drinking

Smoking, vaping, and/or chewing tobacco products and drinking too much alcohol can cause serious health problems. If this is a concern, ask a health care provider for information on resources for quitting drinking, smoking, or vaping.

Acknowledgement

The Iowa Taking Charge of My Health (TCMH) curriculum, including power points, worksheets and fact sheets is inspired by Oregon's University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (UCEDD) Taking Charge of my Healthcare Toolkit which can be found at <https://www.ohsu.edu/oregon-office-on-disability-and-health/taking-charge-my-health-care>.

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The information provided is for general use and not medical advice or intended to address any individual situation.